MARCH 30
1 9 4 3

NEW MASSES

15¢
In Canada
20¢

RUSSIA, BRITAIN AND AMERICA
BY JOHN STUART AND A. B. MAGIL

YOU CAN'T KILL FRANCE
BY ILYA EHRENBOURG

A CHAPTER FROM HIS NOVEL "THE FALL OF PARIS," WHICH WON THE STALIN PRIZE

LABOR FOR OUR FARMS
BY MARIAN JAMES

WHY EHRLICH AND ALTER WERE SHOT
BY BRUCE MINTON

HOLLYWOOD'S TRAIL BLAZER
"Keeper of the Flame" indicts American fascists

BY JOY DAVIDMAN

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICA-RUSSIA-BRITAIN

By John Stuart

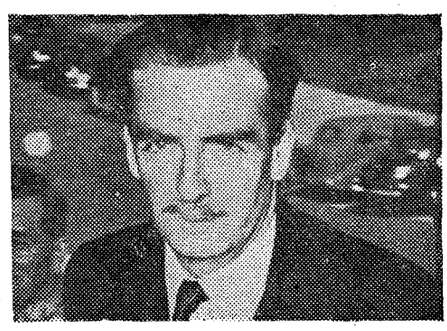
MR. EDEN'S conversations in Washington can be looked upon as a test of the diplomatic effectiveness of the United Nations. No one, except for the hints emerging from obviously garbled and prejudiced newspaper reports, knows the details of his discussions with State Department officials or others in the capital with whom he has been closeted. But it hardly takes a crystal-ball imagination to conclude that Eden's visit is aimed in large part toward clarifying relations among the three great Allied powers. Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union have the military responsibility for finishing Hitler in Europe. Any differences of opinion in the Western triangle must be ironed out if military strategy is not to be snagged.

The existence of divergent viewpoints should not be denied. They are inevitable in any combination of states such as is represented by the United Nations. The signing of the United Nations pact did not overnight fuse different geographical positions, economic systems, cultural traditions, and internal levels of development into a homogeneous mass. Nor do relationships grow automatically. If, in our country, the most valiant efforts have been necessary to achieve unity, how much more difficult it is to weld a common entity on an international scale.

Our problem then is to avoid at all costs a diplomatic war of attrition in which jockeying for position and power so diverts attention from the common goal of victory that the only beneficiary is Hitler. Many of our statesmen have yet to learn—particularly those who have strong imperialist tendencies, although they participate actively in prosecuting the war—that, in a manner of speaking, the United Nations is a non-profit making corporation which exists to protect the shareholders. In specific terms each member of the coalition is fighting to maintain its independence and to arrange a world in which its existence will never be challenged by one power or group of powers. In principle these ideas have been embodied in both the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. But it is only through unambiguous political policies that such principles can come to their full fruition.

If our policies in relation to Great Britain were completely clear and unequivocal, there would probably have been little need for Mr. Eden to have undertaken his present trip. NEW MASSES has repeatedly pointed to the feeling of dismay which many members of Congress have created in British minds. If it isn't Mrs. Luce defying London on the future of air traffic, then it's Mr. Knox, who plays around with bases as though they were toys in a nursery—forgetting that Britishers are always on the alert for anyone who looks as though he were about to pick their pockets. And now there are being propagated in some sections of the press so-called fears that the British have joined forces with the Russians against the United States and that the real patriots are those who will keep London and Moscow apart. These alarms are intended to achieve in reverse what the Hess mission could not: they are directed at separating the United States from two of her major allies. Mr. Dies has grown fat and rich working for this Goebbels inspired objective. But now even the New York *Times*, for example, has reached the point where it dreams of hobgoblins in the form of an Anglo-Soviet bloc which will maneuver the United States into a helpless position.

HERE is a new political toxin deadly in its effects. Instead of welcoming the closer ties between the British and the Russians and doing our utmost to strengthen our own links with both countries, the morally bankrupt would try to split them asunder. The iron necessities of war have taught the British—and this was the focal point of the widely discussed editorial in the *Times* of London—that if only from a geographical standpoint the security of Europe depends "on the joint and continuous vigilance of Britain and Russia." It marks a decided step forward when an important British paper, which in the past was heavily tainted with Chamberlainism, and in 1919 was urging that Finland be used as a base for the conquest of Leningrad and Moscow, now takes the position that the "nineteenth century balance of power" policy must be discarded. Unlike other editorials on the same subject, the language of the London *Times* is neither nebulous nor inflated to mean all things to all men. It says clearly that "both Britain and America have paid dearly for past indulgence in ignorant and wishful thinking about Europe." And, in effect, continues the *Times*, no longer can the old imperialist game be played by isolating Russia from the Continent with a wall of buffer states which are pawns in the hands of larger powers. The alternative is a collective system of relationships in Europe in which small states cooperate with larger neighbors. Any other course spells disaster, and the *Times* is so keenly aware of the stakes involved that it advises Downing Street "to develop the spirit of growing confidence in relations between Britain and Russia" with unqualified agreements.



Anthony Eden

This is such obvious good sense that even the New York *Times* cannot deny it. Struck apparently with a sense of guilt for having made snide gibes in news stories against the London *Times*' editorial, the New York paper proclaims "that peace is indivisible" and that the Allies must stick together. But, it says, "Is Russia ready to cooperate?" Of all the self-righteous nonsense that has appeared in the *Times* editorial columns, this wins the gold cup. It hardly needs an answer except to point out that the Russians years ago first proposed collective security. The *Times* engulfed in its anti-Soviet prejudices wants collective security without the Russians if possible, and if the Russians are to be included, then only on terms the New York *Times* can dictate.

NONE but the mentally unhinged can doubt the wisdom of the London *Times* outlook as against the peep-hole vision of the New York newspaper. The British naturally fear that their action will be misinterpreted in this country. What the British are doing cannot and does not exclude the U. S. This was more than obvious from Mr. Churchill's radio speech of March 21 which is more fully discussed on page 4. It is only with American cooperation that any structure of collective security can be successfully maintained. Walter Lippmann has shrewdly observed that "American security and collective security are two sides of the same shield." Our own national interests, not the interests of a powerful minority which has in the past placed us in the position of rivaling other powers, demand that we be rid of those circles seeking to isolate Russia from Europe and, therefore, Britain from Russia—and, in the process, isolating America from both. We shall have learned next to nothing if the idea of a "bulwark against Bolshevism" blunts relations with the Soviet Union or obstructs their logical development. The simple truth is that collective endeavor could have prevented this war, collective military action will end it, and only collective security in the future can guarantee the peace.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FUTURE IS NOW

By A. B. Magil

IF THAT inveterate traveler, the man from Mars, should drop in on us these days, he would probably be puzzled by the intellectual climate of these United States. He would hear a great deal of discussion about preventing World War III, but very little about winning World War II. He would read many eloquent exhortations about American responsibility in the postwar world, but not much about American responsibility for killing enough Nazis to guarantee that Hitler will not rule the postwar world. Also puzzling would be all this talk about future Soviet boundaries—and so little concern about the present Nazi boundaries.

Perhaps I'm overdrawing the picture a bit, but its essential lines are true. Six months ago the press and radio were filled with the pros and cons of the second front. Today the second front is lost in the hot debate over such matters as the future control of air transport, the future world organization, the future map of Europe, while victory for our side is taken for granted. In a sense this is an oblique tribute to the extraordinary achievements of the Red Army, but it is the kind of tribute which the Russian people are hardly grateful for and American security can ill afford. Much of the discussion about the future peace springs from the best of motives and expresses hopes and anxieties that are in the hearts of millions. Some of it could serve a constructive purpose were it integrated with the problems of the war. But for the most part, where such discussion isn't deliberately divisive, it represents a kind of political escapism, an evasion of the tough problem of winning through blood and sacrifice a total victory.

It is in this atmosphere that four US senators, representing both major parties, have introduced a resolution that this government call a conference of the United Nations to set up a formal international organization. This organization is to "assist in coordinating and fully utilizing the military and economic resources of all member nations in the prosecution of the war against the Axis" and to deal with four other problems which belong largely to the postwar period. This resolution comes in response to the feeling frequently voiced that one of the great elements of uncertainty in our relations with our allies is that no one knows what American policy will be after the war. The point is made that just as Woodrow Wilson's proposals for international cooperation after the last war were vetoed by the Senate, so any future proposals may fail of Senate approval and the United States relapse into a disastrous isolation. It is argued that if the Senate went on record now in favor of postwar collaboration, it would go a long way toward dispelling the fears of our allies.

The spirit and general objectives of the Senate resolution are admirable and undoubtedly reflect wide public sentiment. There is danger, however, that it may nourish illusions unless certain things are kept in mind. First, the resolution does not commit the United States to postwar collaboration, for the simple reason that under our Constitution the Senate cannot make such a commitment. It is the President, acting in his own person or through the State Department, who initiates and conducts foreign policy, though in making treaties, he must secure the consent of two-thirds of the Senate. Secondly, it is not true that our foreign policy has developed in a vacuum and that we have made no binding commitments regarding our relations with other countries. It is sometimes said that the Atlantic Charter is without legal force, that it is a series of glittering generalities thought up by two gentlemen in a boat. But the fact is that the Atlantic Charter has been incorporated in the United Nations pact which has been signed through their accredited representatives by the *governments* of thirty-one nations, including our own. Each of the governments pledges itself "to employ its full resources, military or economic," against those Axis powers and satellites with which it is at war, and furthermore pledges itself not to sign a separate armistice or peace. As for postwar cooperation, article eight of the Atlantic Charter declares that the disarmament of aggressor nations is essential "*pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security.*" In addition, there are the lend-lease agreements, which project economic cooperation in peace as well as in war.

Then there is this to be taken into consideration at the moment: would it really "assist in coordinating and fully utilizing the military and economic resources of all member nations in the prosecution of the war against the Axis" to open the sluices of controversy among the United Nations and within our own country over postwar peace machinery (point four in the resolution) and such questions as an international military force (point 5)? The time will come when it will be necessary to discuss these problems in detail, but isn't this trying to put on the roof before we've built the house?

FURTHERMORE, is it more agreements and more conferences that we need? *Or do we need to carry out the agreements already made?* For instance, the pledge we gave in the United Nations pact to employ our *full* military and economic resources against the Axis—and the decisions of the Casablanca conference and the one held almost a year ago with Molotov. There is a certain fetishism of words developing among many liberals. They seem to feel that what is lacking in our relations with Britain or the Soviet Union or China is more precise declarations about the future. Apparently all we need is to put under us a magic carpet of words and at once we shall be transported to a blissful postwar world.

DECLARATIONS, agreements, and even formal treaties are meaningful only to the extend that they express political reality and are implemented by deeds. The significance of the Anglo-Soviet mutual assistance pact derives from the fact that it registers a relationship already established in action; thereby it has become an instrument for further extending that relationship. But a pact by itself cannot create a relationship which doesn't exist; witness the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact which, after the overthrow of the people's front government, did not prevent Daladier from negotiating the Munich agreement with Hitler. The adoption by the US Senate and the Hill-Ball-Hatch-Burton resolution could not of itself alter the political reality that the Senate and House are dominated by a clique of defeatists and arch-tories who are sabotaging both the war and the peace and attacking the United Nations through insults and witch-hunts directed at Russia and Britain. Even should such a resolution be passed unanimously it could no more prevent this mob from pursuing its unscrupulous aims than did the unanimous vote for declaring war against the Axis. Nor could it deter this Congress or the next from scuttling every proposal for common international effort to rivet down a strong and democratic peace.

What we need is not semantics but action. Action on the home front to compel Congress and certain super-duper diplomats in the State Department to give more than lip service to the President's policies and, above all, action on the military front. As Maj. George Fielding Eliot pointed out recently in the New York *Herald Tribune:* "Nothing would be more likely to bring this [closer relations with the USSR] about than an Anglo-American offensive in western Europe. . . ." And to anyone who isn't headline-drunk, *nothing is so necessary for the defense of our own country and our own future.* It is time to substitute reality for dream. There is no magic carpet. America must fight.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NM SPOTLIGHT

Good Advice

MR. CHURCHILL'S speech underscored again the need for Allied unity and proposed the establishment of a world organization for the maintenance of peace and the restoration of the war-devastated areas. His remarks on the score of welding ever closer unity among Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union will be widely greeted everywhere for the good, hard sense which they express. One may have differences of opinion with the Prime Minister's views on the postwar reorganization of domestic economy. But that is secondary to his point that a system of collective security in Europe, in which the Soviet Union participates as an equal, is imperative. Once this idea becomes the dominant note in international affairs, the advancement of the people's welfare will be a necessary concomitant.

While Mr. Churchill properly stressed the need for winning the war as preliminary to the achievement of any postwar objectives, he unfortunately did not mention the second front or indicate that the decisions made at Casablanca for an invasion of Europe were rapidly reaching fulfillment. His respects to the Red Army in the closing paragraphs of his speech would have had a more satisfactory note had they taken into account the universal impatience in Great Britain, as in our country, with continued delays. This was more than apparent from the recent tremendous meeting in Trafalgar Square for a second front and in the speeches in the House of Lords by Beaverbrook and Strabolgi. Munich influences in British life are still powerful and their effects undoubtedly have obstructed the commitments made both last May and January. In turn the hesitations have strengthened the appeaser coterie.

It was also serious internal difficulties which brought Mr. Churchill to the radio. And his speech was in large part designed to mold greater national unity for a more thoroughgoing prosecution of the war. There have been suspicions about the government's attitude toward the Beveridge plan. The plan was looked upon by various groups—including the National Council of the Trade Union Congress, the Labor, Liberal and Communist Parties—as a program of minimum benefits, and when it was debated in Parliament the Labor representatives were dismayed by the government's tepid response. The government spokesmen hemmed and hawed to the point where the Labor delegation voted en masse against the government for the first time, thereby threatening the national coalition. The hostilities engendered over discussions of the Beveridge report resulted in splitting tendencies in the Labor Party which were furthered by reactionaries.

Mr. Churchill has helped clarify the government's position and his reaffirmation of a more secure future for the British people to be accomplished within the framework of a four-year plan will do much toward eliminating the divisive factors operating against national unity. His admonition that everyone keep his eye on the ball and not be misled into postwar nooks and corners is as decidedly good advice for Americans as it is for Britishers.

Play That Card! Jim Turnbull.

LAST week some wag made the point that if Hitler were ill, he hoped it was nothing trivial. After reading his week-end speech it turns out that the only serious disease afflicting him was the Red Army. There was nothing especially new to be fathomed from his latest performance except that he is suffering from a fresh delusion that the Wehrmacht has only lost a little more than 500,000 men since the beginning of the war.

Even the Nazi generals won't believe that one unless they have taken to fill-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing the ranks of their divisions with millions of ghosts. It would seem too that along with Allied bombardments the Atlantic Charter is having telling effects on German morale. That was clear from the barrage of invective Hitler directed against the document. But most reprehensible of all was not what Hitler said—the words are hoary by now—but the fact that he was able to say it. Had a Western land offensive been coordinated with Soviet military operations, Hitler's temporary silence of the past several weeks would have at long last become permanent. That is one pleasure which only a second front can bring.

Oiling the Axis

On the same day that Gen. Francisco Franco delivered his pro-Axis speech to the new Spanish Cortes, an extraordinary argument was advanced by a spokesman for the British Ministry of Economic Warfare. In a transparently illogical attempt to justify the continued appeasement of Franco Spain by Great Britain and the United States, this official reiterated the feeble excuses previously voiced by representatives of the State Department. In 1941, he said, the Nazis had purchased 2,000 tons of a certain commodity from Spain while the United Nations had bought a negligible quantity. In 1942, however, the Allies obtained more than 2,000 tons and the Axis was able to get only 400. This, he concluded, proves that our economic relations with Spain not only provided us with needed resources but, in particular, kept these resources away from the Axis!

We don't know what commodity the official referred to, but we can be sure it was less important to the Axis conduct of the war than the commodities imported into Spain with the exchange realized from that export. Does anyone for a moment think that Hitler would permit Franco to sell to the United Nations a war material which he needed more desperately than those he could obtain by this incredible trade with the enemy? And what is the principal commodity which the Axis obtains from the United States and Great Britain as a result of those "successful economic relations" with Spain? Petroleum—more petroleum and petroleum products than are supplied to our Eastern seaboard. What is this petroleum used for? Is it true that none of it reaches the belligerent sections of the Axis? Possibly—if we merely mean that the identical barrels of petroleum shipped under Allied auspices to Spain are not delivered in Berlin. It has been reliably reported that adherence to the technicality was the sole concern of our State Department agents when, before our invasion of North Africa, we were shipping oil to the Vichy authorities in that region. It is now well known that Rommel at that time obtained the fuel for his panzer divisions largely through the connivance of Franco and North African Vichy officials; so today it is quite clear that every drop of oil we send to Spain is a drop added to Hitler's resources.

The most favorable light that can be put on the matter is in itself terrifying. It is that our petroleum delivered in Spain simply releases the equivalent amount to the Nazi war machine. Actually the picture is far worse. Franco's troops are mobilizing not only in Spain itself, but directly in Spanish Morocco. Every barrel of petroleum in Franco's hands constitutes a critically dangerous threat to the rapid conclusion of the Tunisian campaign, by requiring a large American-British force to guard against an attack from the very source which we are supplying with the materials to make that attack.

Franco, with whom we are so smugly carrying on these "successful economic relations," told the Cortes last week: "There is a common anxiety that pervades every country: namely, the tangible menace of Russian Communism . . . the presence of Russia in one of the groups gives the war in Europe the character of a war unto death." Thus Hitler's Spanish terrorist, who maintains a division side by side with the Germans on the Eastern Front, publicly declares war unto death upon our Soviet ally.

To continue dealing with Franco as a neutral is suicidal. We Americans, whose boys are giving their lives to smash the very thing which Franco represents, can no longer countenance our supplying him with materiel of war.

Men in the Mines

Any discussion of the coal miners' demands for a wage increase must, for all John. L. Lewis's disruption, accept as a premise the justness of the miners' position. Of all the major war industries today, coal mining is among the lowest paid; as a result miners suffer more severely than their fellows in steel mills and automobile plants—or even in the non-ferrous metal mines—from the increased cost of living.

Both the AFL and CIO have balked at the War Labor Board's so-called Little Steel Formula which limits wage adjustments to fifteen percent and, once these increases are granted, freezes wage at that point. The formula takes for granted that wage stabilization is accompanied by stabilized living costs. But, as a public member of the Board recently commented, the only part of the program now affected is wages. Obviously, with wages restricted and prices steadily advancing, workers are penalized and their standard of living declines. Therefore, the AFL and CIO insist that wages must again be adjusted to compensate for higher prices; once this is accomplished, the entire economy must be stabilized as called for in the President's seven-point program.

Even while condemning the Little Steel formula as discriminatory, labor still insists that the WLB must continue to operate. True, WLB has other faults and inadequacies in need of correction. But labor agrees that WLB performs an important function by speeding the war effort and strengthening the common struggle through the orderly adjustment of disputes. This is where John L. Lewis cuts loose from the rest of labor.

First, however, consider the miners' claim for a two-dollar-a-day basic increase. Actually, without quibbling, the coal

miners can rightfully claim portal to portal pay (from the time the miner enters the mine shaft to the time he emerges). Such a readjustment is equivalent to an increase of at least $1.50 a day, without altering base rates. This method of compensation has already been granted non-ferrous metal miners. Moreover, the coal miners are on solid ground in their demand for a full wage during their week's vacation (vacations have already been granted), for increases still due them under the Little Steel formula, and for pay equalization in relation to established differentials with other industries—recognized WLB practice.

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC., at 104 E. Ninth St., New York City. Copyright 1943. WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office, Washington Office, 945 Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 27, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.75; three months $1.50; Foreign $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months $1.75. In Canada $6.00 a year, $3.50 for six months, U. S. money, single copies in Canada 20c Canadian money. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes. NEW MASSES does not pay for contributions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THESE justified demands are used by Lewis not to rectify grievances but to attack the administration, the war effort, the WLB, the very security of the coal miners themselves. The war, he intimates, will bring ruin to the worker, nothing else. He threatens to violate the labor-management agreement against strikes and lockouts—such action would give the go-ahead signal to the anti-labor bloc in Congress, supported by the National Association of Manufacturers and by every defeatist and appeaser group. Even though the mine workers would suffer along with every other working man and woman, Lewis continues his disruption in the hope of spreading the confusion he desires and to "get even" with President Roosevelt by undermining national morale and menacing victory.

John L. Lewis, once so close to America First, can be beaten. Despite his clamor, the mine case can be referred to the board which ought to deal with it in a constructive fashion. The best way to handle Lewis is to grant the legitimate requirements of the miners, and to supplement this by establishing a win-the-war wage policy as proposed by the AFL and CIO. Stabilization of the national economy in accordance with the President's stated seven-point program would isolate John L. Lewis. It would expose him in his true role as saboteur of the anti-Axis war.

As the defeatists would like it.

The Wrong Target

THE Bankhead-Johnson bill for blanket deferment of farm workers, which the Senate passed by a two to one vote, is one of those things that kills two birds with one stone. It puts a crimp into the building of our armed forces and it helps block conversion of agriculture to a war production basis, thereby threatening the nation's food supply. And in case this wasn't enough, the House passed the Pace bill, which by including labor costs in the parity formula would boost the nation's food bill $3,500,000,000 a year and unhinge the entire price structure. In other words, the "farm bloc" snipers, whose vision was never too good, have again mistaken Uncle Sam for Adolf.

The Bankhead bill would defer all who work "substantially full time" in producing or harvesting crops listed as essential to the war effort. This sounds reasonable. The hitch comes in defining essential crops. Under pressure of the big landowners' "farm bloc" the Department of Agriculture has included cotton and tobacco in this list. It so happens that there is on hand a two-year supply of short staple cotton and a one-to-two-year supply of tobacco. Yet despite this overproduction of cotton and tobacco, if the Bankhead bill becomes law, nearly one-third of the nation's farm labor will automatically be deferred to produce more of these surplus crops. This at a time when only twenty-five percent of farm labor is being used for the production of such essential scarce commodities as truck crops, sugar beets, white potatoes, dry peas, dry beans, soy beans, peanuts, and wheat. Moreover, as Marian James points out in her article on page 18, this is a device not only for freezing labor, but for freezing low farm wages since workers will not be able to leave their jobs without losing their deferred status.

The administration has coddled the predatory, anti-farmer "farm bloc" all too long. The threatening food shortage at a time when the needs of our armed forces, our allies, and our civilian population require maximum production calls for drastic measures. The National Farmers Union, the only national group which speaks for the dirt farmers, has proposed a $1,000,000,000 program to help the family-size farms, most of which employ no labor, increase food production by $1,500,000,000 annually. The Farmers Union and the CIO United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America have also made proposals for pooling machinery and utilizing most effectively the available labor supply. For further discussion of this problem we refer our readers to Miss James' article.

How to Pay

THREE income tax proposals are before the House of Representatives, all concerned with the method of payment under existing laws. One is the Doughton bill, which has been favorably reported by the Ways and Means Committee and is supported by the administration. This would establish collection at the source by providing for regular deductions from payrolls starting July 1. The deduction would be three percent of that portion of the income which remains after a $624 a year exemption, this replacing the present victory tax, and seventeen percent of income above exemptions of $500 for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a single person, $1,200 for a married couple, and $350 for each dependent, these exemptions being increased by ten percent to account for charity contributions and other legal deductions. All these payments would be on 1942 income as at present. However, to encourage taxpayers to place themselves on a pay-as-you-go basis, those who in addition pay this year any part of their taxes due in 1944, will receive reductions up to six percent.

Rep. Joseph Martin, boss of the Republican minority, has called this bill "a monstrosity" because it fails to relieve the rich of their 1942 taxes. He is whipping Republicans into line behind the Carlson bill, a modified version of the Ruml plan. This also provides for collection at the source and the same deductions as the Doughton bill, but the payments would apply to 1943 rather than 1942 income. Those wealthy individuals who have laid aside large sums to pay their tax obligations on 1942 income would simply pocket the money and the government would be out some $7,500,000,000.

THE third proposal is the Robertson bill, the only one that combines collection at the source with pay-as-you-go without a large loss to the government and a bonanza to the wealthy. This measure would cancel the tax on only the first $2,000 of 1942 net taxable income, on which the combined normal and surtax is nineteen percent.

In other words, only the lower income groups would benefit and the loss to the government would be slight. All other groups would be liable for both 1942 and 1943 taxes. The Robertson bill has the support of the National Lawyers Guild, large sections of the labor movement, and many other progressive groups. It is by far the best and most equitable of the tax bills now being debated by the House.

However, this whole issue of the method of payment has been unduly inflated. The problem of raising $16,000,000,000 in additional revenue still remains. The CIO tackled this problem realistically, it seems to us, when it recently proposed an increase in the rates in all brackets starting at $3,000, a maximum net income ceiling of $25,000, a boost in taxes on corporate profits from forty to fifty-five percent, and a 100-percent excess-profits tax on all profits over five percent on the first $10,000,000 of invested capital and four percent on all above that amount.

Security Front

WE ARE happy to note that Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt, undeterred by the ignorant and malicious sniping at the historic reports of the National Resources Planning Board, has sent to Congress recommendations for extension and liberalization of the Social Security Act. These recommendations, by the Social Security Board, are on the whole along the same lines as those of the NRPB's report. They provide for including new groups of workers in the coverage of unemployment and old age insurance, increasing both the amount and duration of the benefits, adding disability insurance, and extending the public assistance program. However, in place of NRPB's proposals for federal action to provide adequate medical care, free school lunches, and expansion of state and local child welfare services, the Social Security Board merely recommends insurance against hospital costs. This is an unfortunate limitation since it is precisely in the field of health and

Exclusive!

Underground

THE underground reports coming from the southern part of the Balkan peninsula indicate growing unrest on the Greek mainland and on the islands of the archipelago between Greece and Asia Minor. The news of the battles in Northern Africa and the victories on the Eastern Front has found its way through the Axis censorship into the tiny villages in Epirus and Thrace and over the Aegean sea. A recent order of the Italian Occupation Command tightened the censorship and increased the penalties for listening to foreign broadcasts.

Partisan units have emerged in Greek Macedonia, in Epirus and Thessaly. They are small detachments of ten to fifty men who make lightning raids on railroad lines and certain Italian blockhouses guarding the main roads from Albania and Yugoslavia to Greece. Only part of these groups are steadily organized and steadily active. There are partisan bands which gather from time to time, between work in the fields or between their fishing expeditions.

Partisan bands in Epirus have established contact with patriotic Albanian units and through them with the fighting guerrilla armies of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Partisans from Crna Gora (Montenegro) under the command of Petar Dapchevich were even able to send supplies to the Epirus partisans through Italian-occupied Albania, thus establishing a kind of lend-lease help. Arrival of arms and munitions from the Yugoslav Partisans—small as the help necessarily was—greatly encouraged the Greek patriots.

In Athens and Piraeus, underground organizations lead actions against the Greek quislings who are trying to recruit labor for German factories. Labor conscription offices were wrecked by bombs twice during November. In the second attack the head of the main office was severely wounded. In the town of Kavalla the Nazis had to transport by plane special Elite Guard squads from Yugoslavia. The Italian garrison alone was unable to cope with the demonstrations of workers and fishermen against the forced labor draft.

The Italians tried to enlist the help of Greek quislings in the incorporation of several Greek islands into the Mussolini "empire." They failed utterly. On the island of Samos guerrillas killed a whole group of quislings. Afterward the Italians were unable to find anybody to support their cause. In reprisal, the Italians took a number of hostages—students, physicians, lawyers, and workers—to break the morale of the opposition. But in vain. Several of the hostages were shot because they refused to sign a manifesto, advising the guerrillas to lay down their arms. The guerrillas replied with a raid on the Italian observation post at Samos Ake. After a brief fight the garrison surrendered. The privates were released, the black shirts executed, the officers became counter-hostages. The Italian Command finally postponed the official act of incorporation of Samos "until later."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

child welfare that immediate measures are most urgent as part of the effort to increase war production.

In certain quarters it is being insinuated that President Roosevelt's transmission of the NRPB reports at this time is a mere campaign gesture with an eye toward the 1944 election. We believe this charge is false. Those who make it would have us forget that as far back as his budget message of January 1942 the President recommended a $2,000,000,000 increase in social security funds to make possible extension and liberalization of the program. Congress did nothing, nor, it should be added, did the Treasury include social security in its tax proposals. We hope that this time the President, with the support of the people, insists that Congress take action on those recommendations that could immediately strengthen the war effort.

THE fatuous clamor that all this is "socialism" or "fascism" or both, a clamor which even the dignified (or is it pompous?) New York *Times* has joined, hardly deserves serious comment. This is probably the only capitalist country in the world in which state capitalist measures are repeatedly denounced as "socialism" by influential capitalists and their spokesmen whose social thinking is still on the stone-age levels.

For example, in Canada the conservative Mackenzie King government is sponsoring a Canadian "Beveridge Plan" which in some respects is even more comprehensive than the NRPB and Social Security Board proposals. And in Britain the other day the Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party said right out loud in a broadcast to the entire world: "There is a broadening field for state ownership and enterprise, especially in relation to monopolies of all kind. The modern state will increasingly concern itself with the economic well being of the nation. . . ." And the empire still stands.

Communique

The guns are the instruments for the first phase.
Some have the honor of keeping the record, the dispatch to the future
More legible than bones and the howitzers tilted like snouts.
Tell them we lived, in what estate the bravest and the innocent died.

How we were stunned by the advancing noise, shaken by the loss of the landmarks:
The public building walked in separate stones the night of the raid,
There was a gap in the block where the man had lived with his family,
The decontamination squad worked in the street where we were born.

How we bore the guns and their deep baying:
We breathed in the shelters and thought of our men without them in the desert:
We saw the women at the station as the troop train slid away and the hospital train came in.

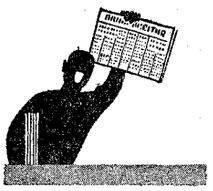
We prepared for gas attack, they taught us the deceptive world:
Tell them of the fragrance of apple blossoms: of blue smoke, the maker of tears:
Of phosgene: the breath of newmown hay: nine times more toxic than chlorine:
Of Lewisite: the odor of geraniums: destroys tissue: fond of lungs and eyes.

How the enemy had ruined the fields:
We suspected the flowers and the flowering trees:
It was the doubtful petals that broke our backs:
How we straightened, how we grew new spines.

It was too enormous for hate: but the blossoms gave us lasting anger.
Tell them we endured tragedy and farce: how the actors in both were killed: how we spoke grave lines for our friends and buried our enemies and gave light flowers honestly to the fields.
Tell them to run off the sound track in their public squares and to listen to us if we are dead.

DON GORDON.

Press Parade



THE *Military Review*, a quarterly devoted to military literature and issued by the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, publishes in each issue a digest of articles from foreign military periodicals. The January issue reprints in condensed form thirteen articles from German sources, twelve from Soviet sources, particularly *Krasnaya Zvezda*, five from British, one from Canada, and one from Chile.

Upbringing Will Tell

"AMONG the strange things that turned up in North Africa during the American landings, this one was not the least startling . . . An American officer told the story: On the night of November 7-8, we landed in North Africa. In front of me, I saw a light, and, of course, I expected to be on the receiving end of a few blasts. . . . But a voice came out of the darkness: 'Are you a foreigner?' . . . 'Yes, American,' I said . . . 'Are you landing, please?' . . . 'Yes, right now.' . . . The voice belonged to a customs official. It was very serious: 'Will you please permit me to inspect your baggage, please?' . . . The 'invader' was stumped apparently because the story ends there."

—*Pour la Victoire.*

After the Fact

"AT THE Overseas Press Club yesterday, Isaac Don Levine admitted that he was the ghost writer of the General Krivitsky series which ran in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and that he had helped inspire Jan Valtin's *Out of the Night*."

—Leonard Lyons, in the New York *Post*, March 11.

Norway

"ANNOYED and worried by the increase of 'seditious' literature, the Nazi authorities have recently issued bogus 'underground papers' of their own in an effort to mislead Norwegian patriots and trap the distributors of the genuine news sheets.

"Latest example is *Frihets Kampen* ('Fight for Freedom'), which makes mild attacks on Nazis and quislings and tries to put over a camouflaged defense of the 'New Order.' Norwegians, however, are up to most of the tricks and take prompt measures to expose the fake journals."

Cavalcade, English weekly.

[Readers are invited to contribute to this column. A year's subscription to NEW MASSES will be given for the best item submitted each week.]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WATCH ON THE POTOMAC by BRUCE MINTON

WHY THEY WERE SHOT

Washington.

THE facts of the Ehrlich-Alter case are known in Washington. They are readily available to all. But instead of examining these facts objectively—and even with a desire to preserve United Nations unity—the Red-baiting press has gone to just one source: the Polish embassy.

Here are the known facts, deliberately left untold, of why Hendrik Ehrlich and Victor Alter, both Polish Social Democrats and Jews, were executed by the Soviet government in December 1942. At the time of the occupation of eastern Poland by the Red Army in 1939, Alter and Ehrlich entered the Soviet Union as refugees, along with thousands of other Poles escaping before the Nazi armies. Subsequently, however, Ehrlich and Alter were arrested by the Soviet government and charged with espionage. They were tried, found guilty, and condemned to death in August 1941. Specifically, Alter and Ehrlich were accused of acting as espionage agents in the employ of the Polish government-in-exile, which is itself strongly tainted with anti-Semitism. Even though Alter and Ehrlich were Jews and Social Democrats, they supplied information of a vital military nature to this reactionary government which has often stressed its anti-Soviet bias more than its opposition to Hitler. More serious, the military information supplied by Alter and Ehrlich to the Polish government found its way into the hands of the Nazi military intelligence. Such information was of inestimable value to the German war machine.

Alter and Ehrlich were confronted with these charges and by due process of law found guilty. Before they were executed, however, the Polish and Soviet governments concluded a friendship pact, one provision of which granted amnesty to all Polish prisoners in the Soviet Union. To fulfill the pact to the letter, and out of desire to cement unity within the United Nations, the Soviet government acceded to the Polish government's request for lenience and pardoned Alter and Ehrlich. They were thereupon released from prison. They remained in the USSR—in Moscow, though later they went to Kuibyshev, when German armies threatened Moscow.

Alter and Ehrlich organized what they called a Jewish anti-fascist committee. They became the representatives of Polish relief in the USSR, distributing to Polish refugees funds handed to them by the Red Cross. The funds comprised donations collected in England, and to a far greater extent, in the United States. During the Alter-Ehrlich administration of these relief funds, a Polish Jewish correspondent in the USSR cabled his newspaper outside the country, charging that the funds were not being fairly distributed, and that discrimination was shown against Polish Jews. The correspondent added that Polish-Jews in the newly formed Polish army within the USSR were maltreated. He charged the Polish embassy in the Soviet Union with responsibility.

The correspondent's passport was withdrawn by the Polish embassy and he was ordered by Polish officials to leave the USSR. He refused to go, appealing to the Soviet government for consideration as a man without a country.

ALTER and Ehrlich were arrested a second time in December 1942, accused of treason. By Soviet law the two men had by now become Soviet citizens. They had been caught using their considerable organization for Polish relief to disseminate propaganda, including pamphlets and leaflets which the Soviet government considered harmful to the war effort during the Stalingrad crisis. When the cause of the United Nations was in balance, leaflets written and distributed by Alter and Ehrlich found their way into the hands of frontline Red Army soldiers.

The leaflets urged the Red Army to halt resistance against the Nazis, to overthrow the Stalin government, and to seek a separate peace between Hitler Germany and the USSR. The Soviet authorities considered this sufficient reason to order the re-arrest of Alter and Ehrlich. At the subsequent trial they were found guilty, condemned to death and forthwith executed.

The *New Republic* has stated that the two traitors were shot in 1941. This is untrue, and contradicts the express words of Ambassador Litvinov. Alter and Ehrlich were shot in December 1942 for activity helpful to the enemy during the battle of Stalingrad. They were tried by a Soviet court, and their execution—and the reasons—was announced by the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Maxim Litvinov. The most bitterly anti-Soviet voices in this country now ask for "justification" and "full records." The question arises: If, let us say, a Frenchman were discovered in an attempt to disaffect American troops in North Africa, what would his fate be before an American military court? And further, how much information would be vouchsafed concerning a secret military trial involving questions of national security?

It is worth noting that when Alter and Ehrlich were arrested for the second time, correspondents were simultaneously informed by the Polish embassy in Kuibyshev that several members of the embassy had been ordered by the Soviet government to leave the USSR. These officials were charged with espionage. The Polish embassy did not affirm or deny the charge. They merely announced the reason for the departure of several officials, and asked the correspondents not to publish anything about it. Since then, this information has leaked out.

At the Polish embassy here in Washington, the Alter-Ehrlich case is considered an "outrage." Spokesmen of the embassy told me that the case was "impossible" for three reasons:

1. Alter and Ehrlich were Social Democrats, and while opposed to Communism, would never aid the Nazis.

2. Alter and Ehrlich were Jews, and as such would never help the Nazis.

3. Alter was a revolutionary, and his cousin, now in New York, was a close friend of Karl Radek and similar figures.

The third point in these specious arrangements requires no comment. The first can be answered by pointing to some of the "best Socialists," like Norman Thomas, and some of the most vociferous Social Democrats, like Abraham Cahan, and others supporting the *Jewish Daily Forward*, who have for years been the most determined inventors and distributors of anti-Soviet propaganda. And what about such "socialist" collaborators with Hitler as Vaino Tanner in Finland, Charles Spinasse and Elie Faure in France, and Henri de Man in Belgium? On the second point—that Ehrlich and Alter were Jews (a fact stressed by the Polish embassy) their racial or religious affiliations did not interfere with their entering the service of the anti-Semitic Polish government-in-exile, or prevent other Polish Jews from charging them with anti-Semitism.

It is a silly argument, anyway—as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

though no Frenchman could be a Vichyite, no Jew could be a Trotskyite, no American could be a Benedict Arnold. Racial origins hardly act as insurance against treachery. All races and all nations know that to their sorrow. The anti-Soviet agitation being built around the Alter-Ehrlich case is destructive of unity among the United Nations and therefore harmful to the war effort while providing great comfort to Hitler. Most of this agitation comes from professional Soviet-haters, a few liberals, a few labor figures who have been misled. Again a question arises: Why is it that the easily obtainable facts stated above have not been published? And are not mentioned in all the discussion of the case up to now? Asked to comment on the case, a spokesman for the Office of War Information stated: "Our agency does not concern itself with matters that are divisive and serve to harm the unity of the United Nations. Disruption is not considered grist to our mill." This statement labels the Alter-Ehrlich case for what it is. It is disruption spread by professional Soviet-baiters at a critical moment in the war and in American history. It is deliberate disruption characterized by an attempt to suppress the truth.

AROUND THE WORLD

IRELAND'S WAR TOO

Dublin (by mail).

With the possible exception of India, few countries have suffered greater distortion of their policy regarding the war than Ireland. Ireland, true, is neutral, regarding neutrality as a proof of her independence. It is a neutrality conditioned by historical circumstances, her internal situation, the size of her defense forces, and the character of Anglo-Irish relations.

That "this isn't Ireland's war" is unquestionably the viewpoint of many in Ireland. The more advanced section of Irish opinion regard this as a short-sighted view. Certainly any effort to enlist the support of the Irish for avowedly empire purposes, as in the past, won no enthusiasm from a nation herself oppressed for so long. But today Ireland has everything to lose from a fascist victory, which would rob her of the partial freedom she has so dearly won.

Nevertheless, Irish neutrality is supported by the majority of the Irish people.

Recall that there has been no widespread discussion throughout Ireland on the character of the war. On the contrary a rigid government-controlled censorship of the press and the films successfully prevents that knowledge and discussion which are indispensable to a popular understanding of the basis of the present conflict.

However, Eire's neutrality is a friendly one. De Valera has said so, and by his actions proves it. One hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen are in Britain's armed forces today, without the slightest difficulty being placed in their way by Eire government. (Chamberlain made it a criminal offense for Britons to join the International Brigade in support of the legal, democratic government of Spain in 1936.) Four hundred thousand Irish men and women work in Britain's war industries.

What dictates the policy of neutrality today? The heritage of centuries of oppression which still rankles in the breasts of our countrymen, as the savagery of German and Italian fascism will in the breasts of the peoples of Europe for years to come. The existence of Partition, whereby Ireland's Six Northern Counties are brutally severed from the motherland, and the hostility generated by a misguided campaign to force conscription upon Ireland and take back by force the ports returned to her in 1938. These things coupled with doubts as to the sincerity of Britain's declarations—doubts reinforced by the exclusion of Ireland and India from the provisions of the Atlantic Charter—encourage the neutrality advocates.

Despite all this—and despite military neutrality—the majority of the Irish people favor an Allied victory, recognizing in fascism the enemy of all liberty. Foremost among these well-wishers are the common people of Ireland and staunchest among those are the trade union and labor rank-and-file. These are the men who, under the leadership of Frank Ryan—still in Gentleman Franco's jail—joined that band of immortals, the International Brigade.

The Labor Party and Trade Unions Congress of Eire have not the political clarity of the Brigaders. They make neutrality the basis of their present day policy. The TUC recently rejected at its congress a resolution from the Belfast Trades Council recording hostilty to fascism in general. By that rejection the Irish Labor movement reveals the absence of that sense of urgency which should be the compelling feature of labor's policy today. Hence that lack of cooperation, of national unity, despite the existence of the Defense Council.

Such unity—imperative as it is—is not encouraged by the present policy of De Valera's government in the south. Wages Standstill Orders; an act introducing the principle of state control over trade unions; inequitable rationing; the rising cost of living; 80,000 unemployed and colossal emigration—these things have produced a natural reaction on the part of a working class made to shoulder the major burdens created by the war.

Seventeen thousand workers under the Labor Party's direction recently demonstrated against these injustices in Dublin. In recent local elections Labor has doubled its representation, thus stimulating the government's preparations to resist the advancing tide by a proposed general election before labor has time to organize its forces.

A most dangerous tendency is the growing disillusionment of some of the poorest sections of the workers expressed in their contempt for democracy because of its present failure to satisfy their just and modest requirements. This is the weed so assiduously planted and watered by German fascism which, permitted to spread, finally overran the democratic gardens of Europe.

To prevent such a catastrophe here is the responsibility of the united leadership of the Irish people today. Nor can this unity be achieved by labor concentrating solely upon the role of government critic in a crisis demanding the utmost statesmanship.

The government of the south is supported by many reactionaries who propagate their neo-fascist theories under the guise of a Christian State, with Franco Spain and Salazar's Portugal presented as models for Ireland. Yet this government has the power to advance unity enormously.

No national unity exists in Ireland comparable to that enforced by the exigencies of war in Britain. This situation can be transformed by a National Government in Ireland. The primary responsibility for this rests with De Valera. Labor, faced with an offer, would find it difficult to refuse. Fainthearts who fear the loss of power through coalition must be swept from the scene by those forces more conscious of their present responsibilty to the people of Ireland.

PAT DOOLEY.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FRONT LINES by COLONEL T.

OUR BATTLE IN RUSSIA

NOBODY is sorrier than I that my prognosis of a few weeks ago is now coming to pass. I stuck my neck out by naming a date—the Ides of March—as the crucial time for opening a second front in Europe in order to ensure the speedy defeat of the German army. And I did make a mistake: the date should have been earlier—for the simple, unforseeable reason that the thaw on the Eastern Front, after a mild winter, came sooner than could have been expected. So the second front, which was urgent enough before, becomes doubly vital now.

The thaw did the following things:

1. On the Southern Front it crippled the Red Army offensive toward the bend of the Dnepr and helped the Germans mount their counter-offensive. The reason for this is also simple: the Soviet troops had their railheads a hundred and more miles behind their spearheads, while the Germans had working railroads coming up to their front lines. Thus the Russians had to march and pull up their supplies through a hundred and more miles of mire, while the Germans rolled up to the battle line in trains.

2. The thaw is slowing up the Red Army offensive in the Central sectors of the front and might easily prevent the Russians from cracking the backbone of the German line there before the whole country along the headwaters of the Dnepr and the Western Dvina becomes a quagmire.

3. Because of the thaw Marshal Timoshenko's advance in the direction of Staraya Russa is slow and laborious. It is beyond all reason to hope that he will break that sector of the German basic line and reach the junction of Dno—which is the main objective—before the "country of a thousand rivers" becomes utterly untenable, to say nothing of being impassable.

4. The thaw is creeping up on the northern sectors of the front, so that even if the Red Army chose to launch an offensive south of Leningrad or against Finland, the time element would very severely limit its objective and completely prevent it from reaching the Gulf of Finland on a broad front. As far as this wing of the front is concerned, one should always remember that here latitudes are no gauge of mean temperature, because the influence of the Gulf Stream makes itself felt more and more as one advances westward. For instance, when Tikhvin is frozen hard, Leningrad already wallows in slush.

5. Since the end of November the Germans had been moving in reverse, falling back on intact railroads, while the Red Army was advancing along railroads which the Germans had converted to the narrow guage and had ruined while retreating. Therefore, the enemy could bring up reserves quickly by train while Soviet troops had to walk and push trucks through hundreds of miles of mire. Nazi reserve formations could come from Paris, Brussels, Prague, and Berlin, smack up to within twelve miles of Kharkov. Soviet divisions had to walk and push to Kharkov from Voronezh, for instance. An average troop train, under conditions which are not of the best, can still cover 250 miles in twenty-four hours. But infantry in deep thawing snow, with the additional burden of helping out the transport columns which get stuck, cannot possibly cover more than ten miles per day. German divisions coming from, say, Hanover, could begin to arrive *five days* after they set out, while Soviet divisions could only reach the battle field *ten days* after the start from Voronezh, or places around there. Thus the enemy could "git thar fustest with the mostest men." Hence the local superiority built up by the Germans along the northern Donets, which permitted them to recapture Kharkov and some 15,000 square miles of territory.

ALL this is caused by the thaw and by the absence of a second front in western Europe. My insistence on the necessity of opening that front before the Ides of March was based on the fact that I was sure that spring would follow winter. It seems to me that other people should have been just as "perspicacious." After all, calendars are available to everyone. I ventured to say that before the spring was out we would hear from Germany a statement to the effect that the Wehrmacht had again been on the verge of utter catastrophe, but had been saved. The spring is not out yet, and Hitler has already made that statement.

Who saved the Wehrmacht? There is only one answer: Allied inaction in the West. The same factor saved the Wehrmacht during the winter of 1941-42. History did repeat itself, in this case, at least.

The Red Army took a long chance in pushing ahead toward the Bend of the Dnepr. The stakes were high and well worth the risk. If General Vatutin's bold maneuver had proved successful, the Wehrmacht would have suffered a new and bigger defeat of the Stalingrad type. But the thaw came and the Allies didn't. The Germans pumped twelve fresh divisions out of Europe and into the Southern Front. The dangerous Soviet salient was erased and the Wehrmacht is well on its way to restoring last winter's line on the southern wing of the front. From now on spectacular Soviet advances are less likely, but German concentrated blows are in order.

Many people continue to claim that "the Russians have superiority of manpower over the Germans." The Sunday N. Y. *Times* has again said so. I repeat, this is a factual fallacy. Hitler has more men at his disposal left than the Soviet High Command can muster. The ratio is better than it was June 1941 but it is still unfavorable to our common cause. The same applies to the amounts of war materiel available to both sides.

The bombardment of Europe from the air by the Allied Air Forces is not bringing the results some people expected. If it were, the Luftwaffe would not be turning its back on Europe and Tunisia in order to concentrate its power against the Red Army.

The Tunisian campaign would have been a good prerequisite for an invasion of Europe, had it not been dragged out as it was. Four and one-half months of "unfinished prerequisites" is a little too much.

Admiral Cunningham, commander of Allied Naval Forces in the Mediterranean, stated very bluntly that 800 ships had carried 6,500,000 tons to Africa since the first week in November. This means that they probably made only two round trips on the average, because of the length of the lines. Such lines would have been ten times shorter if the ships had been carrying men and supplies to northwestern Europe instead of to Africa, sometimes passing around the Cape of Good Hope. My calculation is very liberal at that. On the other hand, we learn that about 450,000 men have been brought to Africa and supplied there by those ships we were supposed not to have. If that had been done on the Britain-France line, the same ships could have made between ten and twenty trips each and could have landed and supplied an army of no less than 2,000,000 or 3,000,000.

Some people might say: we had ready

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and intact ports in Africa, but we would not have had such ports in France. To this we can answer: there were Spain and Portugal which have good ports. Landings could have been made there, Franco and Salazar sent packing, and the stuff we gave *El Caudillo* and his friend Hitler could have gone to the Spanish people, whose existence reactionaries in the State Department seem to have forgotten.

THERE is every reason to hope and believe that our troops in Africa will finally clean up the mess, but that will not in the least cancel the validity of the above reasoning. It is inadvisable to let the fanfares of a local success obscure lost opportunities.

It is even more important not to lose the opportunities of the present. History will not again repeat itself to Hitler's advantage—*if* we prevent it. The Allied inaction that saved Adolf's Wehrmacht can—and must—be turned into action that saves the Allies.

AND that action is embodied in just one phrase, the most popular phrase among democratic peoples the world over: second front—second front in Europe without further delay.

LABOR ABROAD by MARTIN T. BROWN

ALLIED BUT NOT UNITED

THE first encouraging development in the field of international labor unity since the outcome of Sir Walter Citrine's mission to the United States last summer took place several weeks ago: the CIO executive board, after hearing an appeal from Vicente Lombardo Toledano, president of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (CTAL), set up a nine-man committee to work out a permanent relationship between the CIO and the CTAL. This was followed a few days later with a banquet given by the Greater New York Industrial Union Council for Toledano, addressed by Philip Murray and Jacob Potofsky, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who is also chairman of the CIO's new Latin American committee. Potofsky has recently experienced the advantages of international labor unity in the course of his work in rescuing Jewish refugees from occupied Europe; Toledano, backed by the powerful Mexican labor movement, secured several thousand visas from the Mexican government after all efforts through the ordinary diplomatic channels had failed.

The CIO's action brings closer the convocation of a hemisphere labor congress which has often been proposed by Toledano but has made little headway against the opposition of the small group in charge of the AFL's foreign relations. Matthew Woll, the AFL second vice-president, persists in the curious belief that there are other Latin American labor movements besides the CTAL, which is not the case. At one time there was a Pan American Federation of Labor, based primarily on the Regional Federation of Mexican Workers (CROM) and under the tolerant supervision of various official Pan American bodies in Washington. But this has disappeared, and Woll's insistence on negotiating with the same Latin American labor leaders he negotiated with in the 1920s has led him recently to conduct conversations with a number of outspoken Falangists and enemies of the United Nations, with no labor backing in their native countries. When their true opinions became apparent, of course, negotiations were broken off.

A hemisphere labor congress is needed now more than ever to speed up the gradual change of US policy in Latin America from dependence on the most conservative and pro-fascist proups. These groups have taken the side of the Axis, or have taken our side only because they think we are bound to win, which makes them doubtful allies in a war against fascism. The alternative to this policy is an alliance with the truly democratic groups in Latin America—primarily with the trade unions. No one in Washington can have any illusions that Chile's recent action in breaking relations with the Axis was the result of anything but the persistent campaign by organized labor, or can fail to see that labor is leading the fight against President Castillo's bogus "neutrality" in Argentina, the last stronghold of Axis espionage in the Americas.

THE economic reasons for hemispheric labor unity are equally pressing, not only because the wartime economic problems of Latin American countries cannot be solved except on a hemispheric basis, but also because the big mining, utility, and transportation companies which dominate the economic life of Latin America are for the most part US concerns. All the mines owned by the Guggenheim interests in the United States are under contract to the same CIO union, and the interests of both US and Latin American labor would be served if a parallel unity existed among miners' locals in Guggenheim mines in the United States, Mexico, Peru, and Chile. At present production in one country is played off against production in another, to the disadvantage of everyone but the Guggenheim stockholders.

IF SOME form of joint labor action is established in this hemisphere, it will be a step toward true international labor unity, and no unity of democratic unions is possible without including 30,000,000-40,000,000 trade unionists of the Soviet Republics. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions—AUCCTU—had 28,000,000 members before the war, the union members in the Red Army maintain their union membership. About a third of Red Army men are union members. Toledano, who led the fight in the late 1930s for the inclusion of Soviet labor in the International Federation of Trade Unions, told *Allied Labor News* recently that he would seek the direct affiliation of the CTAL to the only body at present which treats with the Soviet unions on an equal basis: the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

The question of Soviet affiliation agitated meetings of the IFTU for almost four years. At one point, in 1937, Leon Jouhaux of France, Walter Schevenels of Belgium, and G. Stolz of Czechoslovakia, after being authorized by a vote of 39-38 by the IFTU to visit Moscow and discuss terms of agreement, signed a pact providing for "cooperation in measures and policies for the struggle against war and fascism." It was agreed that one of three secretaries of the combined body would be a Russian and that the expanded IFTU would immediately undertake a boycott of German and Japanese goods. Unfortunately the IFTU executive committee was not agreed on a boycott of fascist goods and some members expressed a fear that the Soviet delegates would insist on united support for republican Spain. The AFL,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

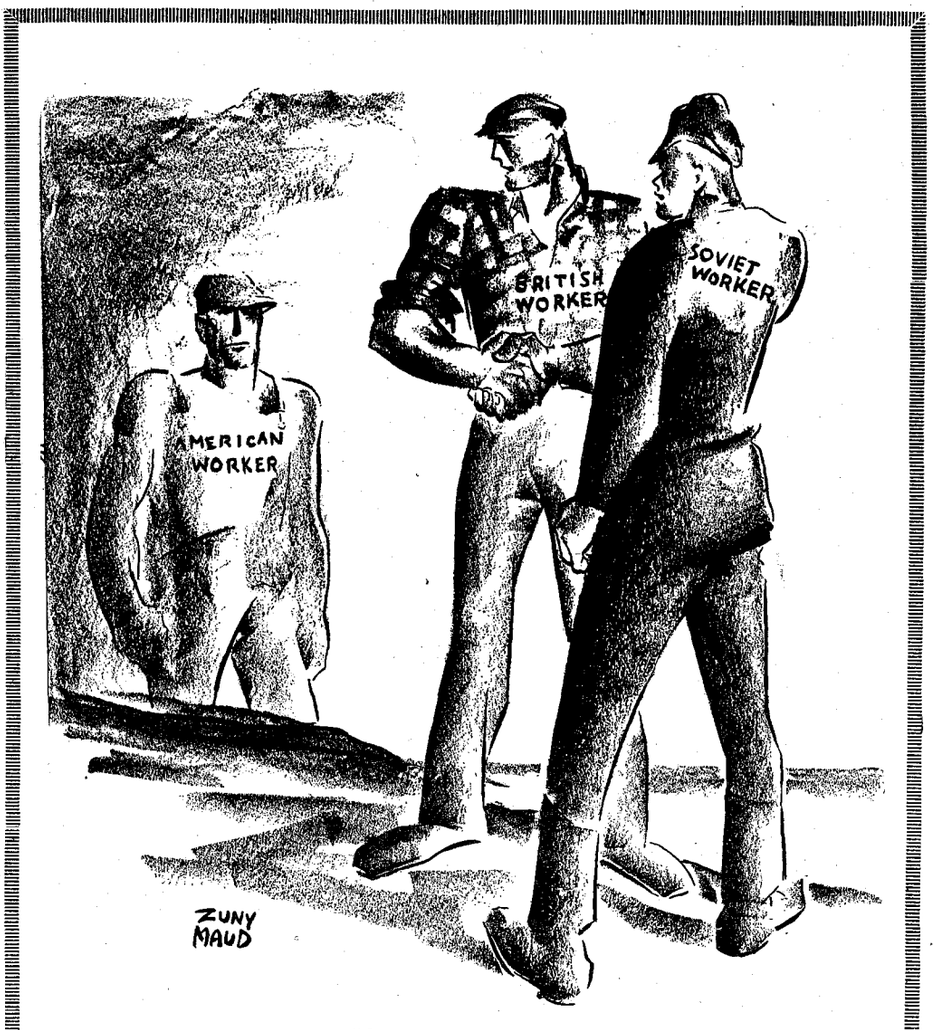
which had rejoined the IFTU a few months before, passed a resolution that "should the Russian organizations become a part of the IFTU we have no doubt that the AFL will feel compelled to withdraw." A meeting of the general council of the IFTU in Oslo in May 1938, six months before Munich, voted 14-7 not to ratify the Moscow agreement. The majority was led by Sir Walter Citrine and Matthew Woll.

The demand for unity from members of the British Trades Union Congress became so strong during the next year that the British delegation to the 1939 IFTU Congress in Zurich voted with Norwegian, French, and Mexican delegates to accept the Soviet proposals. (The New York *Times* correspondent in Zurich reported: "However, the British plea, presented by George Hicks for the Trades Union Congress, impressed many delegates as being lukewarm and almost as much against inclusion of the Soviet as for it.") Delegates from organizations with a total membership of 9,300,000 voted for unity with the AUCCTU, and delegates representing 6,200,000 voted against it, but because of the IFTU system of voting in national blocs, the proposal was defeated by 46 votes to 37. Representatives of the illegal German, Austrian, and Spanish trade union movements, who had announced that they would have voted for unity, were excluded from the balloting. Among the delegates most vociferously against unity were the Finns. Equally vociferous were the representatives of the AFL, who cast twelve votes against unity. The CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods have never been represented on the International Federation of Trade Unions.

After the occupation of the Lowlands, the IFTU moved its headquarters from Amsterdam to London, where it continues to function. At the last AFL convention when Matthew Woll rejected the plea made by Jack Tanner, president of the British Amalgamated Engineers Union, for American affiliation to the Anglo-Soviet Committee, he said that labor unity should not come "through special arrangement or separate accord," but through "the agency designed for the federation of trade unions the world over." Woll later told newspapermen he meant the IFTU, but since he was largely responsible for the IFTU's stand in rejecting the affiliation of the Soviet unions, there is little hope that the IFTU, at least in the near future, can be made into an instrument of international unity.

AFTER serious setbacks in the early stages of the war, when a British delegation headed by Citrine was touring the Finnish battle fronts at the invitation of General Mannerheim, international labor unity advanced to a new stage. In September 1941 the TUC at Edinburgh voted unanimously to send a British delegation to the USSR to negotiate directly with the AUCCTU for Anglo-Soviet unity. In Kuibyshev, in October 1941, British and Soviet delegates signed a joint agreement setting up an Anglo-Soviet trade union committee. The principal points in this agreement provided that organized labor in the two countries should "join in mutual assistance against Germany"; conduct joint propaganda against Hitlerism; support the anti-Hitler struggles of the European peoples; strengthen the individual efforts of the workers to increase war production; exchange information and extend personal contact between British and Soviet workers. In January 1942 a Soviet delegation headed by two of the three AUCCTU secretaries, Shvernik and Claudia Nikolayeva, visited Britain, and their tour of British war factories showed what could be accomplished by real international labor cooperation. After speeches by the Soviet delegates production increased as much as 100 percent in certain factories, the Soviet workers giving the British workers concrete production advice as well as spurring them on to extra efforts. The political effect of the tour was equally important; the twenty-year Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance was signed six months after the Anglo-Soviet trade union agreement.

The history of attempts to secure American participation in the Anglo-Soviet committee can be given briefly. Sir Walter Citrine came to the United States and invited the AFL to affiliate, which the AFL refused to do on the grounds that the Soviet trade unions were government-controlled. Attempts were made by Citrine and Tanner, as well as by a large committee of New York AFL officials, to convince the executive council that the differences between the function of Soviet and American unions are explained by the differences between the socialist and capitalist forms of society; and that many of the peculiarities of the Soviet unions which had always bothered the AFL—such as their refusal to strike and their willingness to cooperate with the government and



"Come on in, Brother."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

management in increasing production—become more understandable in relation to the similar position now taken by labor here and in Britain. The attempts failed. The AFL, as a counter-proposal, suggested that an Anglo-American committee be established, with the AFL members empowered to name "representatives of any bona fide US trade union body" to the committee, and the British members acting as "liaison" with the trade unions of the Soviet Union.

This proposal, which insulted the CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods as effectively as it insulted the AUCCTU, was accepted soon afterward by the TUC. It was rejected by the AUCCTU, which refused to recognize the "liaison" principle. Actually, however, with the first meeting of the Anglo-American committee a few weeks ago in Miami, it became clear that the liaison principle had actually been adopted, for the five British members of the committee were also the five British members of the Anglo-Soviet committee. Unfortunately these five do not represent any of the British unions which are leading the movement for closer international connections. Powerful and democratically controlled unions such as the Amalgamated Engineers, the National Union of Railwaymen, and the Miners Federation, with a combined membership of nearly 2,000,000, have no representative except John Marchbank, retiring general secretary of the NUR, who spent the greater part of his last year in office agitating against the second front—which was supported almost unanimously by the NUR's national convention and its executive committee. Frank Wolstoncroft, last year's president of the TUC, is a leading advocate of Vansittartism—a policy known for its most noted exponent, Sir Robert Vansittart, who proposes exterminating all Germans, including members of the underground trade union movement. Arthur Conley of the Tailors and Garment Workers and H. N. Harrison of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Allied Workers (a loose coalition of twenty-nine craft unions) are the other members of the committee.

The AFL executive committee in Miami repeated its refusal to have anything to do with either the CIO or the Soviet trade unions. Although Citrine and the others met with CIO officials again, it was only to tell them about the AFL objections. The Anglo-Soviet committee is scheduled to meet in Moscow in April, and before then a conference of the labor movements of the British dominions will be held in London. Because labor in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa is anxious for international labor cooperation, some developments may come from these meetings. But for the time being, the absurd eighteen-month-old stalemate continues. Some six or seven men on the AFL executive committee, despite the wishes of large numbers of AFL members, retain their veto power over any advance in international unity—a veto power, exercised in the IFTU, which had much to do with strengthening fascism and making the war inevitable.

As any reader of detective fiction knows, it is never wise to lie down before a blackmailer. Some AFL executives blackmailed the IFTU with a threat to withdraw if the IFTU recognized the fact that trade unions existed in the USSR. They have blackmailed the TUC with a threat to turn their backs on forty-seven years of good relations with British labor if the TUC recognized the fact that American war workers are largely members of the CIO. There is considerable doubt whether either of these threats would have been carried out, or, if they had been carried out, what effect they would have had on the AFL membership and on the majority of the AFL executive committee which is sincerely determined to win the war. Since the AFL has agreed to joint CIO representation on the President's Labor Victory Committee, on labor advisory committees in every government department, on war relief committees, on production and legislative committees in all industrial centers, there is no reason why, given an honest desire for unity on the part of Citrine and others on the general council of the TUC, they should not have directly approached the CIO on the question of joining the Anglo-American trade union committee.

It is for British trade unionists to determine whether Citrine's flubbing of the negotiations is due to his lack of knowledge of the US labor movement or a desire to propitiate the reactionaries on the AFL executive council; whether the difference between his private appeasement of the enemies of unity and his public statements on unity is due to his natural eagerness to please everybody, including British labor, whose views on unity are well known; whether his insulting attitude toward the CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods, at variance with his ordinary polished manner, has been calculated; and whether, in fact, he has hindered unity not only among the international labor movements but also between the AFL and CIO.

One of the reasons why labor in England has wanted to secure the participation of labor in the Western Hemisphere in the Anglo-Soviet committee has been to make it a more lively body. The IFTU, whatever its faults, had meetings of its executive committee every two months and meetings of its general council every three, and these frequent meetings accomplished a great deal in a limited trade union sense. The Anglo-Soviet committee, on the other hand, has held two meetings in eighteen months and the only points in its eight-point program which have been carried out have not depended on joint consultation. J. R. Potts, ex-president of the Railwaymen, is the only British labor leader who has visited the USSR in the last year, and no Soviet labor leader has visited Britain. The Anglo-Soviet committee has had no office, no permanent staff, and it has issued no publications. The immense solidarity which now exists between Soviet and British workers has been brought about unofficially. The shock brigades in British aircraft plants, the production competitions carried on between factories in Britain and the USSR, the wall newspapers, the Inventors' Clubs, the production weeks—all have been promoted in England not by the Anglo-Soviet committee or the TUC, but by the shop stewards' movement. If a truly representative international labor committee existed, no transportation or communication difficulties, no political obstacles, no aversion of British labor leaders to travel, would be allowed to stand in the way of frequent and rewarding contact among the unions of the Allied nations.

Obviously no one but appeasers is made happy by the latest failure to achieve international labor unity. The situation at present calls for a number of things. One is increased pressure by the rank and file of the AFL to force the executive council to withdraw from its position. Another is for US unions to take more interest in the struggles of other labor movements and intensify their protests when injustice is done to the workers and the Allied war effort—the sort of protests which brought about the US government commission now investigating the crisis in the Bolivian mining industry. Although *Allied Labor News*, a news agency serving the United Nations' labor press, has established a wide exchange of information among the Allied labor movements, individual unions should get into direct touch with their counterparts in Britain, the Soviet Union, and Latin America. The CIO should not wait for a go-ahead signal from Matthew Woll, but should arrange for the immediate exchange of labor delegations.

In the early stages of the war arguments for international labor unity centered chiefly around questions of morale. It was said that closer relations among Allied labor unions would increase the solidarity among all anti-fascist workers, make them more determinedly anti-fascist, and lessen, for example, the number of British and American workers who read the Kemrose and the Hearst press. This, while unquestionably still true, is no longer as pressing as it was. But on purely trade union questions, on matters concerning the standard of living and war production, international labor collaboration has as many practical advantages as national unions have over a network of disconnected locals.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FALL OF PARIS

Something brought Agnes to life again after the Boche goose-stepped into her beloved city. Ilya Ehrenbourg tells the story, in this section of his new novel which won the Stalin prize.

The following is the first excerpt from Ilya Ehrenbourg's new novel, "The Fall of Paris," to be published in this country. The author, who has frequently contributed to NEW MASSES *in the past, is world-famous as a writer and as one of our Soviet ally's foremost war correspondents. The section of his novel printed below has been translated by B. Gissin. Alfred A. Knopf will publish the novel in this country in June, in a translation by Gerard Shelley.*

AGNES sat the whole night long by the black window, listening to the drone of the planes, the booming of the guns; she hung yearning over Paris as over her dead. When morning came, she went out with Dudu to see if she could get some milk for the child and for old Riquet. But all the shops were closed, There were no people about. Only one woman pushing a perambulator with children in it. So people were still going away. . . .

A soldier came running around the corner; something about him reminded her of Pierre: he had the same dark face and big whites of the eyes.

"Which is the way to the Porte d'Orleans? Quick!"

She pointed it out to him, and then asked:

"Where are they?"

The soldier only made a gesture of despair and was off. Agnes walked along the street. The shutters of the shops were all closed. There was not a soul to be seen. The hands of the clock in the square pointed to three—it had stopped. And all was still—deadly still.

Then the air was filled with the roar of aircraft. They were flying very low; you could see the black cross on their wings. They'll drop bombs just now, this very minute, Agnes thought. Her own calm astonished her: they might kill Dudu, and the thought failed to rouse her. So she must have gone crazy, she couldn't grasp anything any more.

They were going along the boulevard when Agnes suddenly came to a standstill: Germans were coming toward them. Here was an open car full of soldiers armed with rifles. Agnes, without thinking, covered Dudu's eyes with her hand—that he should not see this thing! She could not collect herself: she did not want to look, yet she found herself staring eagerly into the strange faces. And one thought: "They've come! They've come!" went round and round in her head.

The cavalry came by. The horses drew up, and the pavement glistened where they staled. Agnes made out the word "Lille" on a sack of flour. An officer rode past; he had a scar on his cheek, and his face wore a scornful smile. A monocle glittered in his eye. Another officer had a camera and was taking photographs. He took hers, she fancied. . . . She ought to get away from here, but she could not move. . . . Then more soldiers appeared. They were eating something. . . . Young people. And why did so many of them wear glasses? They were shortsighted, as she was. . . . No, these were strangers. . . . They had come! They had come!

Agnes was standing in a gateway. An old woman in a black cap glanced out. Seeing the Germans, she burst into tears and darted back indoors again. Two prostitutes, highly rouged, passed by; they laughed and waved their handkerchiefs to the officer.

And all of a sudden Dudu cried out cheerfully:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What a lot of soldiers, Mamma! Will papa be coming, too?"

"Hold your tongue! Those are Germans!" she shouted at him.

The sound of her own voice startled her. Dudu began to cry. Gripping him tightly by the hand, she darted down a narrow street; she wanted to get home as soon as she could.

The noonday sun was intolerable. Rubbish was rotting in the sun. In front of each house stood a rubbish bin, brought out three days before, when people were still living in the town. At the gate of the school lay the carcass of an ox, and the sweetish odor of rotten meat enveloped the whole street. Stray dogs, with their tails between their legs, hovered about it. They sniffed the pavement mournfully, then raised their muzzles to the sky and howled.

When Agnes reached the corridor, the first thing she saw was old Ricquet lying on the floor, his hands gripping the jamb of the half-open door; his mouth had fallen open and his tongue hung out.

"What's the matter with him?" Dudu wanted to know.

Agnes made no reply. From the street came the strains of a lively march.

PARISIANS stayed at home those days: they could not get used to the sight of German soldiers in the streets. In the morning Agnes went out to the shops. The long line of waiting people was silent; everyone strove not to think of anything. The hunt for a few potatoes or a bottle of milk absorbed them. If they spoke at all, it was of those who were reported missing; one woman's husband had disappeared, another had lost her son.

Once an old man in the queue sighed:

"And what of France?"

No one answered, but the same thought was in the minds of all: France has gone, too. . . .

Like the personal things that belonged to the dead and lie on his table after he is gone, the monuments of Paris moved one to tears. Poets clasping lyres that were dumb, marshals riding dead charges, bronze orators addressing pigeons. Memories came back to them: "I used to wait for Madeleine there by the statue of Danton. . . ."

They did not want to go on with that illusory life; and yet they went on, they waited in queues, cooked beans, wrote letters, addressing them to places that no longer existed. But there was no postal service. The solitary city heard only the incomprehensible songs of German soldiers, and the twittering of the birds in the shady squares.

There was a square with a garden and a few plane trees not far from the school where Agnes lived. Under the spreading branches Dudu played, scooping up the warm golden sand with greedy little hands. Herein lay Agnes' salvation—in the olive-skinned child, impulsive and impatient like Pierre.

In the beginning Agnes had wanted to escape from Paris; she had felt drawn to Dax, where her father lived. When she heard that it was occupied by the Germans, she became very downcast. Something quivered within her, the last loophole was closed: "So I shall have to live here and put up with them," she told herself.

She sold her clothes, books, and trinkets to the old clothes' shops and lived on what she got for them. Her existence now—sleepy and stupefied as she was—resembled the hibernation period of an animal. Not only Agnes lived like that. All Paris lived in the same way: Paris that was talked of everywhere those days, mocked at or pitied as the case might be. But of all this Paris felt nothing, like a patient who, lying on the operating-table, is incapable of throwing off his chloroform mask.

One close, still evening Agnes sat down by the window after putting Dudu to bed. Time drifted by. She was roused from her torpor by a tap at the door. Who could it be at this hour? Only they. . . . She never thought of the Germans otherwise than "they." Why had they come? And then the thought, quite clear: "If it should be death, I am not prepared for it."

When she opened the door, she saw three young men—mere boys—on the threshold:

"They're after us. . . ."

She led them into an empty, untidy room. The eldest explained:

"I'm a soldier—an artilleryman. And these are my brother and his comrade. . . . We're from Beauvais. . . . I was quiet enough coming here only we were stopped just near the subway. We ran for our lives. Now we've knocked and rung at several doors, but nobody opened them; I suppose everybody's gone away."

There came a persistent knocking at the door. Agnes turned this way and that, wondering what she should do with them. Suddenly she remembered the boxes in the lumber-room. Pushing the boys in there, she piled over them the rags left by the refugees. Then, for some reason or other, she took the sleeping child in her arms and ran to the door.

Two Germans and a Frenchman entered.

"Who lives here?"

"I and my little son. He's four."

"And no one else?"

"No. You can look. . . ."

The Frenchman went into the first room, glanced into the big cupboard against the wall, and picked up a book lying on the table. Then one of the Germans said politely: "Excuse us, madame. It's a mistake."

WHEN they had gone, Agnes quieted Dudu, who, roused from his sleep, was troublesome, and put him to bed again. Then she went into the lumber-room. The youngest—he was called Jacques—was the first to creep out.

"I was terrified I might sneeze," he said, laughing. "The dust in there!"

"I must get you something to eat," Agnes said.

Fortunately there was some soup left, a little bread, and lettuce.

"We haven't had anything to eat since yesterday evening," the soldier admitted.

"Now you can have a good sleep."

"Oh no, we'll wait an hour or so, till they settle down, and then we must be off. . . . If we could only get to Chartres! . . . A man we know there will give us a lift. . . ."

"But where will you go from Chartres? They're everywhere. . . ."

The three exchanged glances, asking each other, it seemed, whether it was necessary to give a reply. Then the soldier said:

"It's not a thing that should be talked of. But you are a Frenchwoman, and you will understand. We're heading for London, to join our general . . . and fight."

"Fight?" she repeated naively. "But the peace has been signed. . . ."

At that Jacques cried our indignantly:

"Signed by whom? By traitors!"

"Sh-sh!" the soldier warned. Turning to Agnes, he explained: "The war isn't over yet. I was at Dunkirk. . . . My brother and Jacques haven't been called up yet. But now all honest men must fight. . . . What have they done with France! In Beauvais. . . . But no, I don't want to talk about it. . . . No, the war is not over yet. General de Gaulle"—he uttered the name solemnly, tenderly—"is appealing to us all. We listened to the radio. . . . From Chartres we have to make our way to Brittany. And from there it'll be easy—the fishermen will take us. The main thing is to get clear of Paris. . . . I have an ordinary jacket and a mackintosh . . . but you see. . . ."

He was wearing khaki army trousers.

"I'll try and find you some others," Agnes said, bustling about. Among the rubbish left by the refugees she found some trousers. The soldier measured them against himself; everybody laughed: they were much too short, but they would do.

Suddenly Agnes said:

"My husband was killed at the front. I don't believe in all this. . . . Why victory?" (She fancied for a moment that she was arguing with Pierre, and she spoke passionately.) "The important thing is: what is in the soul? And people are thinking about frontiers and maps. . . ."

"It is the soul that we are thinking about!" cried Jacques (and again the soldier warned: "Sh-sh!") "Yes, the soul! Is France something that can be drawn on a map? She is here. . . . If France is no more, then I cannot live. . . . And I'm eighteen, I want to live, I want very much to live.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . We shall die, you say? But someone will survive. You have a son. . . . That is France. . . . Isn't it so?"

She shook her head; words had no power to convince her. But when she said good-bye to the three boys, she kissed each one of them, and tears stood in her eyes.

Then she sat down by Dudu's bedside and wept, and wept. This fit of weeping lasted several minutes, but it seemed to her that ages passed. Suddenly she gave a startled cry and rushed to the window: two shots rang out close by, right under the window. . . . Dudu woke up again and began to cry. The door was flung open, and German soldiers burst into the room.

Agnes recognized the French policeman who had come the first time.

"This is the woman!" he shouted.

A German officer said something, and two soldiers seized her.

"Why did you let them give you the slip?" the officer demanded of the Frenchman. Dudu cried. Agnes was dragged away to a waiting car. They twisted her arms and pinioned them; she felt neither fear nor pain. "What will become of Dudu?" flashed through her mind once . . . and she gave a faint scream.

"This is not a lover's embrace," the German said.

It was a particularly dark night. Agnes fancied she was in a wood and took the houses for trees. Then she was led down a long corridor that stank of leather, cabbage, and urine. At last they pushed her into an empty room. "This isn't a prison," Agnes thought. "But what had been here before?" There were inkstains on the floor. Perhaps it had been a school? She saw Pierre's dark face again. He was bending over her shoulder, looking at the school-exercise-book and kissing and kissing her. . . . What a bright light this was, the lamp was right up close to the ceiling! She sat down on the floor by the wall. Then she remembered: "Dudu's all by himself." Despair, silent and dense like a swoon, came down over her. Suddenly she started: she was reading some words scratched on the wall with a nail or a pin: "Good-bye, mother! Good-bye, France! Robert." Why did she want to write: "Good-bye, Dudu!" Why did she imagine it would be a relief to her? But she had no nail to scratch it with. She looked down at her own nails, they were too short; she burst into tears. Then she thought: "They said someone had given them the slip. So the boys must have got away. They would join their general. . . . Jacques was very sweet. . . ." That they had escaped was the most important of all events in her life just now.

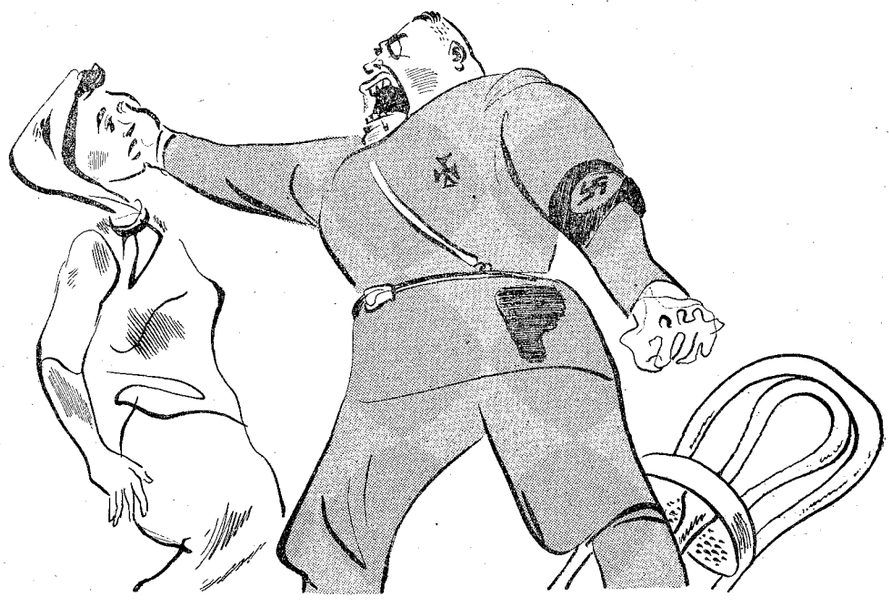
She was led out for interrogation. The German officer sent away the interpreter: he spoke French quite well enough himself.

"I spent two years in Grenoble," he told Agnes for no apparent reason. "It's a beautiful town." He was very gracious and tried to comfort her by saying: "Your little boy is being taken care of." Then, persuasively: "Tell me who those people were, and we'll let you go." Her silence irritated him at last.

"I have no time to waste, madame. You refuse to speak? So you must be a British spy."

She nodded.

"Yes," she said, and her eyes grew soft and tender, as they used to be in Belleville, under the attic window, in the old days when Pierre stormed and grew confused. "Yes, I'm a spy," she went on quietly. "Why did you come here? Everybody is against you now. Even the children. I will not tell you who those men were. Thank God, you did not catch them. That's the chief thing. As for me, you can kill me, I am of no use, I cannot even shoot. . . ."



She felt prepared for death now. And the feeling uplifted and cheered her. Only a little while ago she had been arguing with the three young men. Now she wanted to repeat their words over and over again for this neat pink-faced officer to hear. What a parting in his hair! . . .

He shoved the inkstand away in irritation.

"Enough of this posing! You're not here to make declarations but to give evidence. Kindly answer my question. Do you know these people?"

"Yes."

"Who are they?"

"Frenchmen."

The officer lost all control of himself. Usually well bred and restrained, with manners that only a year ago had charmed the ladies of Swinemunde, he darted over to Agnes and struck her full across the face. She made no sound; only put up her hand mechanically to her mouth and was vaguely surprised to see blood on it. . . . She was beyond the ordinary reactions now. She felt no pain, no indignation at the behavior of this smart and perfumed officer. It was as though they had made her drunk. It was self-abnegation, exaltation: "I love," she repeated to herself, "I love Dudu, and Pierre, and my father, and Jacques, and Robert, and those who, weary and unhappy, descended the steep street on the last day of Paris. One had said: 'Good-bye.' No, it isn't good-bye, my dear! . . . We are all together now. . . And Pierre too . . . And Paris. . ."

She was sitting on the bench in the corridor, telling herself all this. Then they took her to the colonel. He had a scar across his cheek, and his fish-eyes were fixed and staring. He invited her to sit down, and then he began:

"I want to save you. Tell me, who were those people? Aren't you even sorry for your little son? I am speaking to you as a father, I have two daughters. . . ."

Agnes looked at him in amazement: he had aroused her, dragged her back out of the other world. In a muffled voice, as though still talking to herself, she replied:

"Sorry for my son? . . . No. . . . I've come to understand everything today. If one dies, he is saving someone else. The people . . . My people. . . ." She recollected suddenly that she was being questioned. She stood up, straightened her usually stooped shoulders, and spoke in a voice not her own: "You are a father, you say? It's not true. Do you know what you are? A Boche! A Boche!"

The colonel called the sentry:

"Take her away."

To her he said:

"It's the end for you, madame."

And looking somewhere past him, she replied:

"But not for France. And this is not the end. . . . There is no end."

ILYA EHRENBOURG.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LABOR FOR OUR FARMS

America has a manpower reserve to grow the food needed for victory. Some reasons why it is not being utilized effectively. Problems of small and big farms—and some proposals.

IN FARMING, as in industry, manpower is the central problem. Upon its solution depends the achievement of the food-for-victory goals announced for 1943.

In 1940 this country had a farm manpower reserve of 5,000,000 workers — "unused or ineffectively used," in the words of the Tolan committee. During that same year the increasing industrial employment resulted in a revival of rural-to-urban migration. This, together with Selective Service, drew 1,800,000 off the farms by Oct. 1, 1942. Approximately 1,000,000 more, while continuing to reside in rural areas, secured employment other than farm work.

This would still leave a manpower reserve of some 2,000,000. Why, then, are we faced with a shortage of farm labor?

First of all, it should be noted that the decrease in farm labor supply has not affected all areas of the country equally. It has been most keenly felt in the industrial northeast — particularly New York and New England—and some sections of the West Coast. Parts of the Midwest and Mountain States also have lost essential farm workers, especially by migration to West Coast industry. But in the South and Southwest, where most of the agricultural workers are Negroes and Mexicans, a surplus still exists although fewer are now available for farm work.

The farms primarily affected are the large commercial ones, which supply most of the marketed agricultural produce. The "family" farm large enough to require additional hired help is less affected. But the great majority of farmers — more than three-fifths of the total—hire no labor at all even at peak seasons. Many small units have retired from production, particularly in war boom areas.

Generally, however, the small producing unit has continued in operation and is absorbing the labor of most of those working on the land. The chief problem on these units is not labor shortage, but under-employment. The question is: how best to use the full capacities and skills of these workers in a way that will allow them to retain and improve their status as farm operators. As Secretary of Agriculture Wickard said in a recent address, "Our best reserves of manpower—both of managers and workers—are the people already on the land who are not making full use of their time and ability." According to Department of Agriculture estimates, 2,000,000 or more of the total 6,000,000 farms in America could substantially increase their production if provided with government credit and technical services. Many other farms on sub-marginal land could be closed down, and their operators shifted to industry or to farms in more productive areas.

Helping the small farmer increase production is considered an important objective of the official Department of Agriculture program, according to impressively worded releases. It has also been recognized under the provisions of the War Manpower Commission directive on employment stabilization for dairy, poultry, and livestock workers. Under this directive, eligibility for draft deferment extends only to workers on farms classified as essential—i.e., who attain a given productivity per worker employed. However, farmers on smaller units are entitled to deferment for a six-month period during which their production might be brought up to the required standard. Secretary Wickard has stated that "The Department of Agriculture is going to give farmers all the help it can in getting more livestock and equipment, and in generally building up production. If a man's farm is not suited to larger operations, the Department will try to help him locate a better farm that can be qualified as essential."

If these good intentions are not to degenerate into paper pledges, they must be fully implemented by practical aid to the farmers, and they must be part of crop production planning. So far, however, no steps have been taken to assure the necessary funds to make them effective. The "farm bloc" leaders continue to oppose expansion of small farm output. And apparently the Department of Agriculture has never had real confidence in its ability to carry through the program to which it is committed: the farm goals for 1943 have been set largely on the basis of productive plant existing in 1942.

THIS is particularly striking in the dairy industry. Despite favorable weather, milk production for 1942 was only 120,000,000,000 pounds, 5,000,000,000 short of the goal for that year. For 1943 the goal has been set at 3,000,000,000 pounds less than the 1942 goal. The figure would have been much higher if it had been determined in conjunction with concrete plans for mobilizing the unused capacity available for dairy production on our small farms. For they are most capable of expansion in the fields of dairy, poultry, and livestock production, since a satisfactory level of efficiency in this type of farming can be reached with a relatively small productive plant. The point here is particularly important in the case of dairy output because the difficulty of recruiting hired labor for the large dairy farms limits expansion of the big units. As more and more dairy products come under the "shortage" category, the critical need for helping the small farmer will increase.

Of course if the small or middle-sized farmers increase their production, more of them will need hired labor for full time or seasonal work. No doubt many of the smaller farmers cannot pay wages equal to those in industry, as the large producers easily could. What about wage subsidies? But it would be practically impossible to confine such subsidies to farmers actually needing them—it would mean another handout to the commercial farms. But assistance to small farms need not, and should not, be tied in too closely with particular items in the cost of production. Rather it should be on the basis of the producer's total requirements, taking the form of liberal credit and, if necessary, outright grants in order to maintain operation.

IN THE case of the large commercial farms, the problem of assuring an adequate labor supply involves, first of all, the recruiting of hired workers. Labor is being drawn from these farms into industry primarily because the latter brings them better wages and better living and working conditions. From July 1940 to July 1942 average farm wages increased sixty-four percent, but weekly earnings in industry rose by fifty-three percent. The claim of big business farmers that to increase farm wages further would bankrupt the agricultural economy is contradicted by figures from the bureau of Agricultural Economics. Net farm income for 1942 (after deducting labor and other production costs) is estimated to be more than double the average annual income during 1936-40, and two-thirds higher than in 1941. In contrast, wage payments to farm workers (including value of board and payments in kind) are only fifty-three percent higher than in 1936-40 and twenty percent higher than in 1941.

The need for raising farm wages is recognized by the War Manpower Commission. On December 1 Commissioner McNutt advocated "adjustment of wages to bring the income of farm workers more nearly into line with that of industrial workers." Extension of social security and minimum wage legislation to agricultural workers is also being more widely advocated.

Of course, organization of farm workers would be a most effective way of raising the wage level. However, the trade union

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement in agriculture has faced many difficulties in the past and has developed very slowly. Conditions in many parts of the country are now ripe for the development of a strong organized agricultural labor movement. To succeed, such a movement requires the active assistance and support of organized industrial unions.

Another measure to raise wages, now advocated by the CIO, is the establishment of agricultural wage boards similar in function to the British boards, which have been able to raise farm wages in that country to a standard comparable with that in industry. The wage boards, however, can succeed only with strong support from organized labor and with proper labor representation. Lacking that, the boards would actually become a farm bloc tool to prevent further wage increases.

LACK of adequate housing for farm workers also adds to the difficulty of recruiting or retaining labor. Expansion of Farm Security Administration camps in all areas where migratory labor must be used, or where distances are too great to permit daily commuting from home to farm, is the answer to the problem of housing seasonal workers. A tougher question is how to meet the equally urgent need for housing steadily employed farmhands who must live on the farm. Although married men with families are still available in many sections of the country, they frequently cannot be employed on farms because there aren't housing facilities for their families.

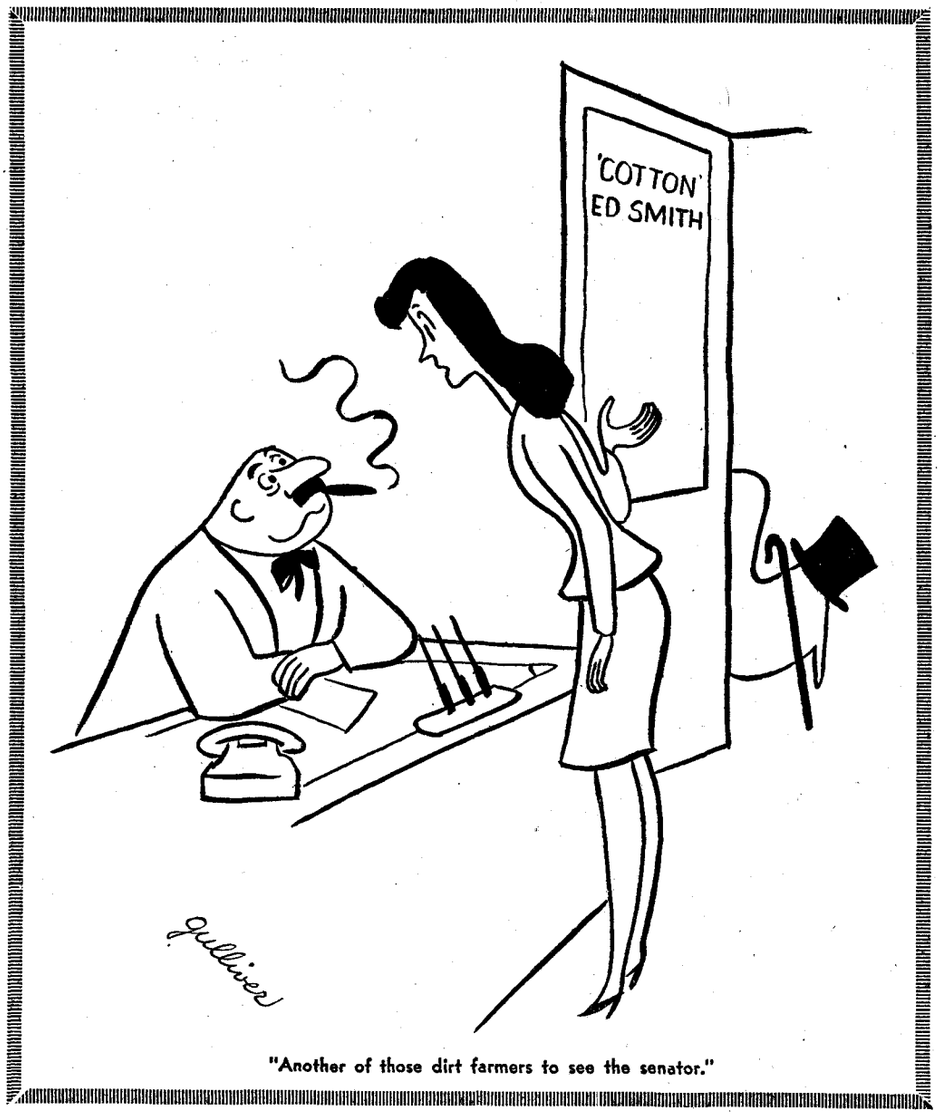
Much of the migration of farm workers before the war was unnecessary, in the sense that sufficient labor was available locally to do the job. There are some important agricultural areas, however, where outside workers are really needed at the peak seasons. Special steps will be necessary here. And it is no less important to assure facilities for transporting workers locally from home to farm and from one farm to another.

To date federal action on these problems has been limited to providing transportation fares for groups of workers who had to be moved 200 miles or more to the place of employment. This program, jointly administered by the FSA and the US Employment Service, was started in the fall of 1942—approximately 9,000 workers were transported under safeguards established by the government. These safeguards are: (1) payment of a minimum wage of thirty cents an hour, or that prevailing in the locality, whichever is higher; (2) maintenance of minimum housing standards; (3) guarantee of employment for a specified proportion of the total period for which the workers were to be available. In periods of unemployment, maintenance in lieu of wages is supplied by the government. It is understood that workers are brought to farm areas under this arrangement only after all efforts to obtain labor within a 200-mile radius have failed.

A MORE ambitious plan for controlled migration was recently announced by the War Manpower Commission, involving "full time continuous employment of mobile groups of experienced farm workers, transported at government expense from one area to another as the crop matures." This would eliminate wasteful and unnecessary migration. It also suggests a permanent solution to the migratory labor problem in the postwar period.

Because farm work is highly seasonal, it is impossible to assure all farm workers year-round employment. At the same time it is neither desirable nor possible to keep a force of workers on relief in rural areas during the winter so that they can be employed for a few months in the summer. The answer to this problem is the employment of persons who do not ordinarily work either on farms or in essential war industry—housewives, students, and even workers in non-war industries. Outside workers should be brought into a locality for temporary farm work only in areas where such labor reserves are not readily available. Use of inexperienced labor of this type accounted in considerable measure for the successful harvesting of crops and the maintenance of farm employment at usual levels during 1942. However, many abuses in recruiting these workers have pointed to the necessity of adequate standards and safeguards during 1943. Too often mobilization of volunteer workers has taken place on a scale larger than necessary, in order to keep down the wage rates of regular agricultural workers. Workers have been induced on grounds of "patriotism" to accept wages far below the standard even for inexperienced labor. Young people in New York and New England were recruited at twenty-one dollars a month. High school boys in New York state were used to replace experienced workers who were demanding wage increases. In the South, in spite of an adequate supply of adult farm workers, primary schools were closed down or operated part time so that children could pick cotton.

The 1942 experiment also shows that inexperienced labor was used most efficiently in those areas offering adequate pay and decent working conditions. Farmers in



"Another of those dirt farmers to see the senator."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

substandard wage areas often failed at the same time to provide adequate transportation, training, and supervision. This year the following standards should be maintained: (1) Recruitment of workers only through the US Employment Service after careful determination of the need for such labor in a particular locality; (2) adequate wages and working conditions; (3) satisfactory transportation, supervision, and training. Finally, while it is necessary in some farm areas to employ children of high school age, it is also important to guard against relaxation of child labor standards. Most state laws offer no protection against the exploitation of young children in agriculture, and the incentive to use such labor will increase. The recent amendment to the Sugar Act eliminating restrictions on the employment of children under fourteen in the sugar beet fields is a danger signal.

FARM employers look upon foreign labor as an easy resource when the supply of workers at home begins to dwindle. There is no intrinsic reason why American agriculture should not employ workers from other Allied nations near our borders if they can be spared from their own country and if suitable standards of employment are maintained. However, the chief impetus for the employment of these people at present comes from the growers who hope to obtain a supply of cheap and docile labor.

The Mexican and United States governments are determined not to allow a repetition of the World War experience, when floods of Mexican immigrants came over the border, with disastrous results for the Mexicans concerned and for the American farm workers. An agreement made in the summer of 1942 between the Mexican and United States governments laid down specific pre-conditions for such importation —substantially they were the same as those for the transportation of American farm workers.

During the fall of 1942, 3,000 Mexican workers were brought into California to work in the sugar beet harvest. Agitation in Texas for Mexican importation subsided with suspicious suddenness after the announcement that the terms included a thirty-cent-an-hour minimum wage. While minimum rates in the California beet fields far exceeded thirty cents an hour under the terms of the Sugar Act, they were still below the rate offered for work in other California crops. Poor housing conditions contributed to the difficulty of getting local labor. (The housing standards set up by the FSA as a condition for importation of Mexicans are so low that it is doubtful whether California workers could be obtained under such circumstances.) An ample supply of American Mexicans from Texas would have been willing to come into California for this work, since wages were much above the Texas level. But the Texas growers blocked active federal recruiting of Texas workers for California, and eventually the authorities in Washington became convinced that Mexican nationals were the only resource.

Pressure will increase this year both for greater importation of Mexicans and other aliens and for relaxation of employment and housing standards. The conflict has already come to a head in California. Last December a conference of farm workers, employers, and government representatives was held on the issue of Mexican importation; it ended in Associated Farmers' rejection of the Mexican government's demand that workers receive hourly rather than piece rates and that housing conditions be fully equal to those acceptable to American workers. Since it is probable that there will be a genuine need for Mexican labor in California next summer, the attitude of the Associated Farmers constitutes a serious threat to the food production program. Florida growers also want cheap alien labor—at present they are agitating for the importation of Negro workers from the Bahamas. This in face of the fact that the peak season in Florida agriculture occurs during the winter months at a time when thousands of workers in other parts of the South would be available if offered decent wages and working conditions.

ANOTHER step is being taken to maintain labor supply on the farms—the deferment from military duty of all farm workers considered "essential." While deferment when properly used is a justifiable and necessary measure to retain irreplaceable skilled labor on farms and in industry, the Bankhead-Johnson bill is an attempt to distort this policy by "freezing" farm workers, including many employed at producing commodities which can hardly be considered essential. Under the directives issued to date, workers are forbidden to leave employment on an essential farm for another type of work without explicit permission of the US Employment Service. Employers under Army and Navy contracts are forbidden to hire such workers unless certified by the Employment Service. Behind the attempt to "freeze" labor is an attempt to keep wages from rising.

Sound policies on farm labor issues will be established only at the cost of a severe struggle with the reactionary leaders of industrialized agriculture. Their attitude was neatly summed up at a conference held during the first week in January by leaders of the four most important farm organizations, who speak for the big business farmers.

Those groups are the National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, and the National Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation. Their leaders at the conference demanded (1) revision of the parity formula to permit a general upward swing of farm prices; (2) an increase in the industrial work week to fifty-four hours or more, with all overtime pay eliminated (an attempt to wipe out the differences between farm and industrial labor by lowering the standards of the latter); (3) dissolution of trade unions in industry, and abandonment of attempts to organize farm workers; (4) importation of Mexican and West Indian labor under "practical" procurement and distribution conditions (presumably the elimination of safeguards on wages, housing, and working conditions); (5) elimination of all "impractical" restrictions on the placement of American farm labor (this is an attack on the FSA standards); (6) the freezing of seasonal as well as year-round workers to agricultural employment, which means perpetuation of underemployment on the farms; (7) elimination of any attempted regulations or activities by the US Employment Service, Federal Security Administration, or any governmental agencies which "seek to impose union conditions in the employment of farm labor."

THE powerful pressure behind these proposals must be countered by still greater pressure, especially from organized labor, the progressive farmers' organizations, and dissenting groups within the Farm Bureau and the Grange.

Careful planning and control of farm production as part of our whole war economy are needed in order to make the most of our available manpower. The Department of Agriculture and the WMC have already announced that emphasis will be placed on essential crops and that growers of non-essential crops will risk obtaining no government assistance in recruiting the labor they need.

Finally, it must be recognized that industrial labor policies have a direct effect on the supply of rural manpower. We are still far from having absorbed all the manpower and womanpower available in our urban communities. Applicants for jobs are still discriminated against on the basis of sex, color, religion. There are pools of unemployed labor still untapped in several of the great metropolitan areas. Employers with discriminatory hiring policies have at the same time recruited workers in large numbers from the farms and villages — workers of the "right" color and background and, perhaps most important, workers who are inexperienced in matters of union organization and grateful for wages that seem high by rural standards. In the last analysis, the problem of farm manpower is only one phase of the total manpower problem. And manpower is itself part of a larger problem which requires some such solution as that proposed in the Tolan-Kilgore-Pepper bill for a centrally planned and administered national war economy.

MARIAN JAMES.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Our Publishers

To you who live west of the Hudson, our sympathy. We know there are certain compensations in residence distant from Manhattan, but we know, too, there is one drawback: you cannot attend the affairs sponsored by New Masses. You would have profited considerably by coming to the Earl Browder-George E. Sokolsky debate last Sunday. It was one of New Masses' big days. The hall, holding well over 4,000, was jammed; people had to be turned away. What was said will be published in New Masses next week. Look for it.

We were gratified with the turnout. We expect to repeat these important events regularly, knowing that our audience and its friends want the crucial issues of these times clarified, and as quickly as possible. We try to do that every week within these thirty-two pages.

We are able to do that because of our readers—the same folk who came to the debate. They want that hardy American institution—the New Masses. They are truly the publishers of the magazine. You—NM's publishers—are now being asked to guarantee its continuance through 1943. That is the meaning of our current drive for $40,000. Last year you understood it so well that you actually went over the top by several hundred dollars.

Unfortunately, we cannot register the same success this year. Certainly not at the present writing. Last year at this time we received $12,517. This year, for the same period, $8,974. We are falling behind, and most dangerously. We are obliged to warn you that the magazine will be in a crisis shortly, unless the drive steps up to meet last year's figures. We don't want to sound shrill, but we will talk out with all our might and main. We know you would never forgive us if we didn't, and the magazine died.

It will never die if you heed our warning. You always have. But time is pressing.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A BRIDGE IN SPAIN

You will, I am certain, understand those of us who continuously hark back to Spain and those ancient—yet so contemporaneous days—of five years ago. After all, Spain was an international Aberdeen proving ground: tactics and strategies, military, ideological, diplomatic, were tested there. Goering's Luftwaffe learned a lot south of the Pyrenees; so did Guderian's panzer divisions. So did Goebbels' foxy propagandists: they offered the world the gargantuan lie that the Spanish war was between Communism and fascism. They sat mealy-mouthed in the Non-Intervention Committee, gambling upon disharmony in the chancelleries of the non-fascist world. Their chips were stacked high by 1938 when Madrid fell, prey more to fifth column division than to Franco's might. How much Spain has to teach us! And have we really learned the lesson? Have we, Ambassador Hayes?

I think of Spain today, think of it often when I consider the issue of the second front, for example. Analogies are risky, I know, yet I keep thinking of those days just before the Ebro River was stormed by the republican armies. It couldn't be done, many learned men said. The republic didn't have men enough, didn't have material enough, didn't have generals smart enough. The enemy had overwhelming strength on the other bank. The heights were on the wrong side of the Ebro; the enemy had had plenty of time to build unassailable defenses. And I remember lying on the roof of a building this side of the Ebro one day and looking through a spyglass at the fascists across the river at Asco. I did see cement blockhouses and barricades down every street. Sure, it looked pretty formidable and that Ebro was a wide, wide river to cross. Where would our side get the boats to take thousands of men across; and what did the republicans have, besides rifles and hand grenades and machine guns once they did get over? It looked like a pretty hopeless proposition to the foreign military scholars in Barcelona.

But the men of the Popular Front thought otherwise. Morale was at its apex then, because unity, under Premier Negrin, was at its apex. The two great trade union setups, the UGT and the CNT, had achieved a relatively close working relationship through the *Comites de enlace*—the committees of liaison." These political factors were bound to evidence themselves on the front lines.

I REMEMBER one day about the middle of July 1938 encountering a caravan of trucks heading down the Reus road toward the Ebro, bearing rowboats. I learned later that all the fishermen along the Catalan coast had offered up their skiffs to the army. As soon as I saw that, I knew what was up. Anyway I made it my business to get down to the Ebro as fast as I could and happened to be at the waterfront the morning the men went over. I crossed a little while after them, on the footbridge the engineers had strung across. By that time the republicans had stormed the heights, stunning the defenders, and had advanced some miles into enemy territory. They captured a number of towns and some eight, ten thousand hard-boiled Falangists, Moors, and some German and Italian officers. A roaring success indeed: what couldn't be done was done. Yes, there were some fainthearts and worse —fifth columnists—who had argued against it, but there it was. But the latter didn't surrender so easily. . . .

The republicans swept to the plain about the key town of Gandesa, some dozen miles from the riverside. Gandesa was heavily fortified, and it could well defy men with rifles and hand grenades. The loyalists had to deploy and wait on heavy reinforcements. Republican tanks were waiting on the other side of the river, trucks with heavier stuff. There were cannon. The loyalists had brought up a wealth of material—big amounts in terms of what they customarily used. Runners kept arriving from the front lines with the message, "For God's sake, bring up the heavy stuff." That stuff was waiting, bough-covered, along a camouflaged road. I had returned from the opposite side, had dispatched my account by runner, and was sitting in the third truck of the caravan waiting to cross again. We waited for the completion of a bridge strong enough to bear the freight. It was scheduled for completion shortly after dark. Dark came, and the bridge was not quite finished. The runners kept piling in from the front. "The Italians are bringing up their mountain artillery to Gendesa. . . ." Nine, ten, eleven o'clock—the drivers in the tanks were gritting their teeth, the truck drivers were in and out of their seats. Shortly before midnight the bridge was finished. Suddenly you heard the gears shifting all along the line. All ready. . . .

The first truck inched its way forward: the bridge held. The truck reached land. Then the second truck edged forward. I happened to be in Truck No. 3, at the waterside, and watched the second truck breathlessly. There was damn little space on either side of its wheels. The truck inched on, got to the halfway mark, and then—the front wheels swerved, struck a stanchion, went overboard. The bridge broke in half. I never want to hear a groan again like that which went up from the waiting men.

The bridge couldn't be repaired immediately. Naked men toiled in the water, above it, below it, sweating, straining, but the bridge was broken. Dawn came and with it the Messerschmitts and Capronis roaring down from the horizon. They came every hour on the hour like a commuter's train. They bombed, bombed, bombed, trying to smash the bridge, and searched for the concentrations of men and material. They ceased at nightfall and the bridge was repaired that night. The heavy stuff did get across, but by that time Mussolini's men had brought up enough artillery.

TRUE, other bridges had been thrown across the Ebro above and below this spot. Heavy material did get over elsewhere, but evidently not enough. The stuff at this bridgehead might have turned the tide. The enemy had won enough precious time to strengthen Gandesa. Had that mountain city fallen, the invaders could have fanned out, and far more than a foothold across the Ebro would have been won. The breaking of this single bridge proved pretty disastrous.

Later, I learned that the driver of Truck No. 2, which cracked the bridge in two, was a fanatical Falangist, who had bided his time for just such a moment. I always see him when I hear the words "fifth column."

Yes, Spain has many lessons to teach us. It was, after all, the place where the term fifth column was coined. That perhaps, is the most important lesson. That, and the corollary fact, that you can move mountains, cross rivers—and a channel—if you have unity—and if you have the will.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET

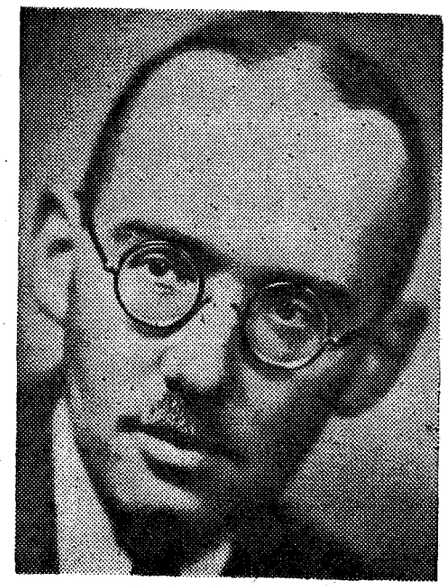
A democratic writer, in the tradition of Whitman and Mark Twain, he became a "heroic trumpet of the people's war." His sympathetic interest in younger writers. By Joy Davidman.

To a whole generation of young writers, like Norman Rosten, Margaret Walker, and myself, Stephen Vincent Benet's name was literally synonymous with poetry. It was he who, as editor of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, selected our work for its first publication. The critical introductions he wrote seized upon our half-formed meanings and made passionate sense of them; seized our groping emotions, our uncertain technique, and showed us the way toward growth. There never was an editor at once so kind and so brilliant. We knew him first through his illuminating letters; meeting him later, we found a slight, quiet man with an extraordinary warmth of personality and glitter of wit. It was characteristic of him that he put us at our ease at once; he had none of the forbidding bardic affectations that often characterize lesser poets too conscious of their fame. I looked forward to meeting him with the sort of intemperate flutter of the nerves that one keeps for one's private gods; yet in five minutes I found myself rattling along about Hollywood and the musical glasses, as naturally as if he were my brother.

Yet, however personally we may feel his death, it is impossible not to feel it even more deeply as Americans. I do not speak for myself alone in saying that his poetry was exactly that which a young poet dreams of writing, which young poets of this America would sell their souls to write. At a time when too many of our writers were still assuming expatriate attitudes of desiccated contempt, Stephen Benet recognized and inherited Whitman's United States. There are three main traditions in American poetry: the sterile aristocratic tradition of Poe, which had its one great name and then dwindled away into the Deep South; the somewhat pedantic flowering of New England, born of the culture-consciousness of mercantile Boston and withered with Boston's trade; and the people's tradition, which never withers. Mountain ballad-singers, Negro cotton-pickers, sea chanteymen gave it a voice; Whitman found it a pen. Carl Sandburg and his contemporaries sang it down the Mississippi valley, while the Eastern imagists were matching primrose and lavender petals and fiddling with their vowel-sounds. Eliot dived into the dark well of his soul, Pound paraded his snobbish and meaningless erudition. But Stephen Benet, writing in the people's tradition, made the *Ballad of American Names*.

His youthful work—he was a great poet as young as Keats—sprang directly from the songs he had listened to. The mountain fiddler and the mountain rhythms were in his poems; their language was the talk you hear in the street, whether they were tales from American mythology, personal love-songs, or the impish flashes of wit which were as characteristic of him as the passion of his serious moments. Youngest of a distinguished family of poets, he grew up with prose and verse literally bubbling out of his fingers' ends. The lyric poems and the vigorous novels of his early years culminated in *John Brown's Body*, which had a popular success unprecedented in the contemporary history of poetry.

It was a young man's book, sensuous and romantic; yet it remains one of the finest and most comprehensive studies of the Civil War in our literature. To many of us it came as our first hint that poetry was real and dealt with the real world far more vitally than our favorite movies. It was read to me when I was a child, convalescing from some illness; I read it over again till I knew much of it by heart. I could no more criticize it dispassionately then than I could have analyzed the glitter of a shower of August meteors; I could only be silent and look at the wonderful light. So it was all the more heart-warming, fifteen years later, to find that *John Brown's Body*, unlike so many childhood delights, was as fine as I remembered it.



Stephen Vincent Benet

Stephen Benet was not the sort of writer who, having achieved one great success, repeats himself forever after in the vain hope of doing it again. In the years that followed *John Brown's Body* he developed both as prose writer and as poet. In tales like *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, his contributions to American mythology have already become classics of our literature, and the comparison with Mark Twain is not out of place. He shared with Mark Twain not only love of the land's face and the salty American laughter, but also something even more fundamental: the democratic spirit. And in his poetry the many-colored romanticism of his earlier work crystallized into the diamond clarity of *Burning City*. Many poets have recorded the strange and heartbreaking beauty of our world, many have reported its tragedies, many more have prophesied according to their inspiration; but only a great poet like Stephen Benet is able to unite the three as in the tragic, beautiful, and prophetic volume, *Burning City:*

This is the man they ate at the green table
Putting their gloves on ere they touched the meat.
This is the fruit of war, the fruit of peace,
The ripeness of invention, the new lamb,
The answer to the wisdom of the wise.
And still he hangs, and still he will not die,
And still, on the steel city of our years
The light fails and the terrible blood streams down.

That is from "Litany for Dictatorship," whose few pages hold as much of the horror of fascism as an acre of verified catalogues of the dead. But there's no use in quoting and discussion, except to make us aware again of how much was lost because Stephen Vincent Benet died at forty-four. It only remains to add that he never pleaded the special privileges and immuni-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Workers School
Bi-Centennial Commemoration of

Thomas Jefferson

PROGRAMME
AMBASSADOR
CLAUDE G. BOWERS
has written a special paper for the occasion to be read for him
MR. EARL BROWDER
MR. FRANCIS FRANKLIN
ENTERTAINMENT
at the
Cosmopolitan Opera House
135 WEST 55TH STREET • NEW YORK
APRIL 9th promptly at 8 p.m.
Admission 55c and 35c
Tickets for sale at
Workers School, 35 East 12th Street
Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street

PROMPT PRESS
PRINTERS
113 FOURTH AVE., N. Y.
GRAMERCY 7-8582
UNION SHOP

ties of his genius. Before the war came he cried out that it was coming; and when it could no longer be averted there were precious versifiers enough who claimed to be excused from social responsibilities because of something that they called, God help them, their Art. If ever a man were justified in considering his private work of paramount importance, it would have been Stephen Benet.

But he did no such thing. He was working on an epic poem of America, *O Western Star*—named from a line of Whitman. He laid it aside with only its first section finished, to plunge into the struggle against fascism. Organizations, committees, radio programs, meetings, and pamphlets—he was pretty sure to have a hand in them, working far beyond his strength. The radio play *They Burned The Books* and the *Dear Adolf* programs are familiar to all of us with their definition not only of the enemy we are fighting but of the victory we seek. He had written of and for the people all his life; it seemed natural to him that he should become the heroic trumpet of the people's war, to speak their will toward victory and a remodeled world. He died speaking it; on the writers' front.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Thought and Action

MAKE THIS THE LAST WAR, *by Michael Straight. Harcourt Brace. $3.*

IN THIS valiant, thoroughly moving book, Mr. Straight reveals the chief virtues and most characteristic vices of the best in American liberals. Lest I appear to be damning with faint praise let it be clear that the virtues far outweigh the vices.

The contemptible sneers with which reviewers like John Chamberlain of the New York *Times* and Louis Fischer in the *Nation* dismissed aspects of this book —its passion for the United Nations, its cry for cooperation with the Soviet Union, with the Communists everywhere, its appeal for an "affirmative society" of national plenty and equality—these are enough for those of us who understand Straight's shortcomings to come to his defense.

The power of the book, its good will, and bold thrust are unmistakable. Several ideas are central. The first is that this war is not only for survival against fascism but including that and beyond that, it is a phase in the irrepressible march of all humankind toward genuine national and social freedom. Several chapters elaborate Henry Wallace's important idea: that the whole struggle of our era, in which the October Revolution and the fight for Asia's liberation are foremost, is a link in the great chain of democratic, liberating struggles flowing out of the American and French Revolutions. Straight is confident that if our own democratic ideals are taken to their logical, historical conclusions, we need neither fear Russia nor be unequal to the challenge which Russia presents. Earl Browder observed some weeks ago that it is this self-confidence of our ruling circles in democracy which the country needs today. Straight epitomizes this self-confidence, and his whole book is a sharp cry for it.

Integral with all this is Straight's emphasis that the age of imperialism is over; he assembles excellent documentation to show the effects of imperialist institutions on the rest of the world. Some of his best writing is devoted to the argument that our own victory will not be assured unless the subject peoples get the chance of participating in this war as equals, and through such participation gain their freedom. Integral with this also is an important theme throughout the whole work, a theme long familiar to Marxism, namely, the necessity of integrating national sovereignties with international cooperation. Straight is hot for federation, European, continental, world federation. If that is not possible without fundamental change, then he is for fundamental social change.

Another theme develops one of Milo Perkins' addresses last summer: the underlying issue of the war is the failure to make the mass-production economy work for the common weal. Straight spends furious pages arguing out the need to break down the monopolistic restrictions on our wartime economy. He sees this not only as urgent for victory, but as part of the larger fight to expand productive capacity in order to raise living standards at home and abroad when this war is won.

"We need have only one war aim," he says at another point, "to recognize what we have already created." By that he means to recognize that the world is indivisible, that only through indivisible unity among the United Nations can we fight through and eradicate fascism. Within the process of war, says Straight, the institutions for winning the peace have been created. He wants the United Nations to endure after the armistice. Anglo-American planning, which he considers has made great progress, must be enlarged to include China and Russia. A Supreme War Council is one of his key slogans; he wants regional planning and even world planning to begin right now; his passages on the crisis over the second front, failure to develop a common fighting strategy with the Soviet Union, are among the sharpest and best between these two covers.

He sees democracy hinging on Soviets in Russia, community councils in England, town meetings in America, cooperatives in China. And he closes on the note of action. "Thought which does not end in action," as Romain Rolland observed, "is an abortion and a treachery."

So this is a young man's sword, as Pearl

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Buck calls it. Yet I must admit it was not easy to push through to the finish, not only because each page is written at a high voltage, with almost no emotional relief, but because, as I have said, it exhibits a number of the characteristic vices of our most valiant liberals. I am not thinking only of lesser items: his study of imperialism lacks the understanding of class factors which distinguished Lenin's. Straight is warm toward Marxism, quotes Lenin, Marx, and Stalin as though announcing that they hold no terrors for Michael Straight. But here and there phrases creep in this like this: "We need to recognize that for Russia and eastern Europe, and for all peoples without well-established cultural traditions, soviets may represent a system of democracy that is far closer to the mass of people, and far more able to interpret their spirit than our own parliamentary institutions. . . ." It is good to see this recognition of soviets as democracy. But the idea that the Russian or eastern European peoples have "no well-established cultural traditions," and therefore can "take" Soviet democracy is nonsense. There is moreover an implicit chauvinism in the whole conception, a chauvinism which Straight inveighs against in the meat of his argument. Nor do I care for quotations from the Menshevik economist Yugow, or the idea that Russia will approach the western world's political system, if only we are decent and fair to Stalin today. But all this is on the minor side.

Straight is of a growing fraternity of American liberals who have scanned Marxist ideas, found them indispensable, but who shy away from one cardinal ingredient of Marxism, its *responsibility*. By that I mean, they fail to grasp in Marxism the tactic and strategy of struggle which bases itself on the primacy of the modern working class as maker of history. Straight is hot for men to act; he wants everybody to work together, peasants, workers, intellectuals, business men, and that is fine. But hidden away at the tail end of the book is the idea that if only everybody joins the Free World Association, men will bring about the great changes he proposes. I have nothing against the Free World Association; but it is a little disturbing to find Straight's poor focus on just which forces in our world are capable of driving the locomotives of history. Likewise on these vast planning projects. Their motivation is of the best. But I found all the elaborate architecture of regional and world planning—all very urgent in Straight's analysis—just a bit irrelevant. It is out of focus against the fact that a second front is still not opened after two years of war, that we still don't have unity among French patriots, that important forces are still thinking of buffer states in eastern Europe.

It is all very well to cry out for the industrialization of Asia, but India is today in deadlock and chaos; men are being arrested for shouting: "Release Gandhi." Many hard, detailed, tactical and strategic problems precede, and are part of, the big issue of industrializing Indonesia or China. *Responsibility* for these hard, day-to-day, tactical and strategic problems is what Straight has not absorbed from his reading of Lenin and Stalin. That is why his valiant, sometimes exciting book—certainly the best among the war aims discussions—occasionally palls. It often happens that in his world-building, Straight falls into word-building. JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Anti-Fascist Whodunit

THEY DEAL IN DEATH, *by Robert Terrall. An Inner Sanctum Mystery. Simon & Schuster. $2.*

PEOPLE who read mystery novels regularly are pretty much divided into two categories: those who conceal the fact or apologize for it with chestnuts about the "tired genius"; and those who don't let a good chance slip for discussing with equally uninhibited friends the differing tactics of a Holmes, a Maigret, and a Hercule Poirot. In the opinion of the latter group, to which I proudly belong, it is not an apology but a factual statement to observe that the present day whodunit, far from being a mere frivolity, contains some of the best fiction craftsmanship to be found anywhere. Aside from the minutely careful plot construction, the dialogue is good, no longer serving strictly as a spoon to dish out the situations. There are even characters—not one great detective, but a number of lesser people with real personalities. The writer's own personality is not subordinated to formulae.

Robert Terrall's novel has still another element: anti-fascism. It deals not with individual murder (though there are killings) but with an aspect of Hitler's underworld in this country. Its thugs, from hired criminals to white shirt-fronts, have the job of procuring industrial diamonds for Adolf—more important in war than engagement gems. To find the source of the traffic and stop it is the self-assumed task of Mr. Katz, a diamond merchant with a personality as fascinating as his business. Mr. Katz has an assistant named Patricia Moon, whose fiance, Mr. Barker,

NOW AVAILABLE

NOW IN STOCK

The MUSIC ROOM
takes extreme pleasure of offering on

COLUMBIA RECORDS

PAUL ROBESON

SONGS of FREE MEN
Accomp. by L. Brown, Piano

This Album Is a "MUST"

- PEET BOG SOLDIERS
- JOE HILL
- SONGS OF THE PLAINS
- NATIVE LAND
- PUREST KIND OF A GUY
- FROM BORDER TO BORDER
- OH, HOW PROUD OUR QUIET DON
- FOUR INSURGENT GENERALS

ALBUM M-534 .....$3.67

SHOSTAKOVICH

Quartet Op. 49 by Stuyvesant String Quartet

ALBUM MX-231 .....$2.63
(Sell Us Your Old Scrap Records)

The MUSIC ROOM
133 W. 44th ST., N. Y. C.
LO. 3-4420 • Open Evenings
Mail Orders Shipped Promptly

NOW AVAILABLE

RUSSIAN SKAZKA

- Superlative Russian and American Cuisine
- Soviet-American Recordings

DINNER, 75c
Late Snacks 25c Beer & Wine
17 Barrow Street
IRT to Christopher Street
Ind. Subway to W. 4th Street

Have a good time
Carry on 'till dawn

HILLTOP LODGE

Reunion and Dance

SATURDAY EVENING
March 27, 1943 8:30 P.M.

HOTEL DIPLOMAT
108 West 43rd Street New York

SIZZLING SWING BAND
REFRESHMENTS
SURPRISES

$1.00—tax included

Part of Proceeds to RUSSIAN WAR RELIEF
Directors: Sol Rothauser, Paul Wolfson

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOTEL ALLABEN
THE HOUSE OF WINTER ACTIVITY
501 MONMOUTH AVE., LAKEWOOD, N. J.
LAKEWOOD 819 OR 1222 JACK SCHWARTZ DIRECTOR

SPECIAL
PROGRAM OF ENTERTAINMENT for
EASTER WEEK
Make Reservation Well Ahead

An Inexpensive Vacation for the Entire Family!
Newly Furnished Bungalows on sturdy structures. Individual Kitchens. Lake on Premises. Tennis, Handball, Rowing, Fishing, Bathing, etc. Grocery and Luncheonette on Premises. One and one-half hours from New York. Write or Phone for Booklet.
Somerset Bungalow Colony
* FORMERLY CAMP CARLISLE *
SYLVAN LAKE • HOPEWELL JUNCTION, N.Y.
N. Y. OFFICE 45 E. 17th St. ALgonquin 4-7712

A VACATION HAVEN 40 MILES FROM N. Y. CENTRAL VALLEY N. Y.
Birdland
Formerly Lewisohn's Estate OPEN ALL YEAR
225-acre estate. ALL SEASONAL SPORTS. Bicycles, Ping-pong. Games, recordings, library, dancing. Open fireplaces. Excellent company. Excellent cuisine. Every comfort. Incomparable surroundings. Tel. Highland Mills 7895.
Your Hostess, FANNIE GOLDBERG

Your Vacation Point
Vitality for Victory . . . aided by Plum Point's invigorating winter sports and soothing, restful indoor activities. Come for a week or a week-end.
PLUM POINT
ATTRACTIVE RATES New Windsor, N.Y.
FREE BOOKLET Newburgh 4270

OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND
Tennis Handball Ping Pong Recordings
Folk Dancing
Rates: $25 per week; $5 per day
THE BEST IN FOOD AND FUN FOR ALL
N. Y. Central R. R. to Beacon, N. Y. Taxis meet all trains. Telephone Beacon 731.
CAMP BEACON
Beacon, N.Y.
Office: 2700 Bronx Pk. E., N. Y. OLin. 5-6900

FOR VICTORY BUY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

also becomes involved in the search. I could hardly tell you any more of the story without becoming the victim of a real-life murder at the hands of the nearest mystery reader. However, it's permissible to say more about the characters of Mr. Katz and Mr. Barker, who have not met before the book opens and whose relationship remains so formal that they go through city sewers, Christian Front hangouts, and gunfire together calling each other Mr.

Mr. Barker is a non-violent young man who has just returned from Spain, where he distributed food sent by the Friends Service. In Franco's country he had lived on chick-peas and watched the Falangists snitch credit from the Friends for the supplies from America. All he wants at the moment is a good meal, some peace, and Patricia (whom he had met in Portugal). Mr. Barker's development, however, as a partner in Mr. Katz's Nazi-hunt, is so rapid that within thirty-six hours he learns to release the safety-catch on a revolver before firing. His political development, building on his experiences in Spain, is excellent, particularly after a few encounters with Franco's counterparts among the Christian Front and the erstwhile Bund. Mr. Katz knows what he wants from the beginning, and he goes after it with a shrewdness and coolness that make a nice complement to his courage and his peculiar humor. Mr. Katz, as a matter of fact, is indescribable; you'll have to learn about him for yourself.

Besides the excitement and suspense—as much and as good as in any thriller—there is a good deal of plain speaking about what fascism *is* instead of merely what fascists look like. It's true speaking, and does not interfere with the motion—far from it. The political comment comes so naturally, and is so integrated with the situations, that it may be taken as the seasoning that ultimately distinguishes a good dish. Not that the author makes his point with comment alone—just wait, for example, until you hit the scene with the saboteur in the machine-tool plant. *They Deal in Death* proves, in short, that thrillers can serve a war function and still be good fun. Which is all anyone can ask short of the millennium. BARBARA GILES.

Reader's Poison

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "READER'S DIGEST," *by Sender Garlin. Forum Publishers, P.O. Box 228, Station D, New York. 10 cents.*

THE power of a lie has always been over-rated. It is untrue that "a lie can travel around the world before the truth can put its boots on." Sender Garlin by his splendid campaign against Jan Valtin proved that Lincoln was nearer right—you can't fool the people all the time.

This is apropos of the appearance of

NEW MASSES
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
50c a line. Payable in advance. Min. charge $1.50.
Approx. 7 words to a line. Deadline Fri., 4 p.m.

SALES HELP WANTED
A New Masses Reader with sales experience wanted for an important steady job for New Masses. Man or woman—salary. Apply at once in writing to Herbert Goldfrank, New Masses, 104 East 9th St., N. Y. C.

LIVE IN NEWARK
WANTED: Girl to share 4-room apartment. Full kitchen privileges. Inquire MODERN BOOKSHOP, 216 Halsey St., Newark. Phone MArket 2-5492.

WANTED—ROOM IN FLATBUSH
SINGLE, middle-aged gentleman wants well-furnished, light, spacious, airy room, in private house with porch, in Flatbush Section of Brooklyn. Must have good subway connections. Write Box 1817, New Masses, 104 East 9th St., N.Y.C.

GYMNASIUM
Get in shape. Reduce—build up—relax. Trial visit $2.00 includes Swedish massage, handball, vapor baths, individual exercises, posture correction, electric horse, bicycles, etc. Men, women, separate days. GOODWIN'S GYM, 1457 Broadway. WIsconsin 7-8250.

INSURANCE
PAUL CROSBIE—Insurance of every kind—whatever your needs — FREQUENT SAVINGS. 799 Broadway, New York City. Tel. GRamercy 7-5980.

MANUSCRIPT TYPING
Manuscript neatly and efficiently typed. Union rates. Apply Box 1809, New Masses, 104 East 9th St., N.Y.C.

WANTED FOR NEW MASSES
Issues from January and February 1942 wanted to complete our files. Also December 9, 1941.

THE UNIQUE VIEWPOINT
ON THE AIR
"WORDS ARE BULLETS"
NEW MASSES RADIO ANALYSIS
EVERY SUNDAY AT 12:45 P. M.
WQXR - 1560
ON THE DIAL

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sender Garlin's unusually interesting pamphlet *The Truth About "Reader's Digest."*

In 1939-40 Jan Valtin's obvious hoax, *Out of the Night,* circulated in millions of copies in book form, in newspapers, and magazines; its largest circulation was through *Reader's Digest.* More than any man I know, Sender Garlin kept blasting away at the mountain of lies piled up in Valtin's book. He proved it the product of a diseased and criminal imagination. He exposed the hand of Isaac Don Levine. He patiently investigated and reported the facts from Valtin's prison record. He traced many of the characters mentioned by Valtin and told their real story.

Garlin, in this pamphlet, exposes the miserable role of *Reader's Digest* in perpetrating this wretched hoax. The magazine circulates over 7,000,000 copies (including the Latin American edition), and is an important source of those ingredients that go to make up public opinion. How the *Digest* is doctored to serve pro-Nazi propaganda is told in other sections of the pamphlet called "How It 'Buttered Up' Franco," "Cover-up for Defeatists," "Negotiated Peace," "Knifes Russian War Relief," and "Saboteurs of the Mind."

The text is excellently illustrated by William Gropper.

SAMUEL ADAMS DARCY.

March 26

AT THIS writing, the entries to NM's contest for a poem most suitable for publication in our Jefferson Anniversary are still being submitted. By the time the magazine appears, however, only twenty-four hours will remain before the contest deadline, which is March 26. So this is a last reminder to poets who have not yet turned in their entries. For the benefit of those who have poems written in the past which might qualify, but who have not yet submitted them because they did not know the rules of the contest—we repeat: a prize of twenty-five dollars will be awarded for the poem which best expresses the spirit of Jefferson in terms of the issues of today. It need not necessarily refer to Jefferson or his work. The judges in the contest are William Rose Benet, Eda Lou Walton, and Ridgely Torrence. All entries must be in NEW MASSES' offices by noon of March 26; they should be addressed to Poetry Contest Editor, NEW MASSES, 104 East Ninth St., New York City.

THOMAS JEFFERSON ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

OUT APRIL EIGHTH

AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS

ROBERT MINOR

A. LANDY

DR. PHILIP S. FONER

A Symposium Of Prominent Americans On U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. RELATIONS

Also

THE WINNING POEM IN NEW MASSES CONTEST

READ IT IN NEW MASSES NEXT WEEK:

THE DEBATE BETWEEN EARL BROWDER AND GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

"Is Communism a Menace?"

FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR READERS WHO WERE UNABLE TO HEAR THE ACTUAL DEBATE ON MARCH 21st AT NEW YORK'S MANHATTAN CENTER,

NEW MASSES IS PUBLISHING THE TEXT IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE — OUT APRIL FIRST

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KEEPER OF THE FLAME

Hollywood gives us a movie that attacks American fascism. And the people of America "crowd the box offices" to see it. A superb filming of Donald Ogden Stewart's script.

EVERY so often there is a great social film that divides critical comment rather as the Dreyfus Case divided France—and along the same lines. Abandoning all pretense at objective criticism, the reactionaries among reviewers have set themselves to misinterpret, to sabotage, to suppress *Keeper of the Flame*. The unscrupulous *News* completely falsifies the film's plot to make it appear an attack on Roosevelt—which it is not; the pompous *Sun* bumbles vaguely about "depressing" and "poisonous" revelations of the truth about our home-grown fascists; the hypocritical *World-Telegram* laments that *Keeper of the Flame* does not stick to being merely a good mystery thriller. And the *Herald Tribune*, while admitting that we once had native fascists whom the film unmasks, claims that they all died at the time of Pearl Harbor, and that therefore an attack on American fascism is "untimely"!

And the people of America? They crowd the box-office. The boys in the army, the sailors on our ships, write letters to say how much the film taught them about the true nature of this war. Great films are hard to sabotage; just as *Tennessee Johnson* and its kind are usually impossible to build into box-office successes, no matter how hard the reactionaries try.

Keeper of the Flame is the story of one Robert Forrest. A car crashes through a broken bridge as the film begins, and Robert Forrest dies. Then the people of America, who know him as a great hero, mourn at his grave. He fought well in the first world war; he spoke for Americanism; he accepted no public office, preferring to act quite disinterestedly. But why are the boys of the Robert Forrest Youth Clubs who attend his funeral, wearing uniforms and marching in formation?

And why is there a fascist salute at his grave? And what is his widow hiding?

Somehow, it appears that the public adoration of Robert Forrest had very little real knowledge to build on. He lived in what was practically an impregnable castle; many saw his face and heard him speak, but few knew him as a human being. At the funeral there is a distinguished foreign correspondent, just back from a firsthand study of the horrors of fascism abroad. He thinks of Forrest as a symbol of American democracy, the antithesis of all he has seen; and determines to write the great man's biography, as a weapon in the struggle against fascism.

To do this he must know the real Forrest. And it is his endeavor to track down the real Forrest which makes the picture. A grim and absorbing hunt, this chase after a dead man; through his wife and his mother, through his secretary and his gatekeeper, through the small boy who adored him, and, at length, through the secret room where he kept his records, Forrest is revealed.

It is not an "untimely" revelation—*pace* the *Herald Tribune*. This Forrest is no one American fascist; like Lindbergh he was once a hero, like Hearst he lives in a castle, like Coughlin and the late Huey Long he works through semi-military organizations, like several we could name he has secret connections with fascism abroad; like all he hates and fears the people. That some of these fascists have had their stingers temporarily drawn does not make the portrait of Forrest a belated one. There are still Gerald Smith with his America First party, and Dies, and Rickenbacker, and the slow seethings, like a tangle of snakes, of many more who take courage from the non-arrival of the second front. Now as never before American fascism must be stamped out, before it loses the war for us; and *Keeper of the Flame* is a bright weapon to kill it with.

On the trail of the real Forrest, the correspondent meets and comes to love Forrest's widow. Muted and dignified, this love is completely in key and subordinated to the political theme of the story; here Donald Ogden Stewart, who wrote the magnificent script of *Keeper of the Flame*, has actually improved upon the novel from which it was taken. There is extraordinary skill in the subtle indications of Forrest's true character, small things in themselves, but achieving a cumulative effect like a tidal wave. You see the eager, uniformed children of the Forrest Clubs. You look at Forrest's portrait; the jutting chin, the magnetic eye, the pose of power and pride. You meet his equivocal secretary, all soft-voiced devotion to his master's memory, who goes around burning the dead man's papers. Forrest's gatekeeper had been his superior officer in the last war; oh, yes, Forrest was very kind. The gatekeeper's daughter was one of Forrest's secretaries,

Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in a scene from "Keeper of the Flame."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

until she happened to have a nervous breakdown.

And Forrest's widow, beautifully played by Katharine Hepburn, is a white frozen statue; and Forrest's mother is a mad old woman who cackles with arrogant glee over her showy house, her possessions, her domineering son.

So, finally, you find out how Forrest met his end, and why; and the discovery is a completely satisfying release of the tension that has piled up. Forrest's Berchtesgaden-like retreat contains the plans for a seizure of power. Everything was ready; the organization, the money, the arms. He was on his way to his putsch when he died.

It is his widow who makes this revelation, in a passionate speech in which Miss Hepburn literally crackles with electricity. Here the implicit theme of the film emerges in incisive language. For the widow thinks only of concealing the truth, of sparing the American people the pain of disillusionment about their treacherous idol. It is the correspondent, played with directness and power by Spencer Tracy, who says the words that can never be untimely—that the people are not children. They deserve the truth, and they must have it.

Forrest is exposed; but his movement survives him, his supporters go on conspiring. That is the piece of information which *Keeper of the Flame* contains, and which so many people would like to see suppressed.

It remains to give credit where credit is due. The producers of MGM who backed this picture are to be congratulated on so welcome a change in their company's none-too-clean record. The director, George Cukor, has given Stewart's script just the atmosphere of brooding ominousness that it calls for; the actors are restrained and powerful. Tracy and Hepburn are far finer here than in their screwball *Woman of the Year;* Richard Whorf is particularly effective as the ambiguous secretary, and Margaret Wycherly as the dreadful old woman who is Forrest's mother. The driving force of the film, none the less, transcends individual contributions, uniting them into a single clear statement: the enemies of the people are moving among us under cover of darkness. They must be exposed.

Now that it has been pretty generally admitted that Mikhailovich is spelled q-u-i-s-l-i-n-g, the attempt to glorify him in *Chetniks* should have been withdrawn from the screen. Only an unworthy penuriousness can prevent Twentieth Century-Fox, which has done some good work lately, from simply writing off its investment in this lamentable boner. For *Chetniks* is not only a complete misreading of the Yugoslavian situation, but so bad and silly a film in itself as to disgrace any company even were the story it tells true.

The great Mikhailovich, *Chetniks* tells us, blithely leaves his wife and children in the midst of the Nazis until they are discovered—and then moves heaven and earth to get them out, finally attacking a town to accomplish what could have been done with a word a week before. The sinister Gestapo agent of the film, far from bringing his favorite Fraulein along from Berlin as a secretary, hires himself a Yugoslavian girl who practically runs the underground movement in his office. Wives and mistresses are tossed back and forth between the Nazis and the Chetniks, rather as if their war were a badminton game. And generals dance in and out of each other's camps under a flag of truce, solely in order to call each other bad names and refer to the fact that their political principles do not agree.

With a few dashes of chauvinism aimed at the Italian people, to top it off, *Chetniks* is as perfectly mixed an emetic as any druggist could provide.

"Hitler's children" is well-intentioned, nicely executed, and fairly well acted. It purports to contrast an American school in Berlin with the Nazi school across the way; actually and inevitably, the school days soon give place to young love between a girl from the American school and a Gestapo man trained in the other. Some of the more horrible moments of the New Order are effectively recorded: the *Frauenklinik* where "unfit" (i.e. intelligent and independent) girls are sterilized; the pathetic child who asks nothing better than to give her fatherless baby to the fuehrer's tender care; the labor camp where flogging is one of the milder punishments for girls. But the power the film might have had is lost to it through a mechanical and unnatural plot. The Gestapo boy sees the light and intervenes in his sweetheart's flogging in the nick of time; condemned to death, he is thoughtfully furnished with a nation-wide hookup over which to attack Nazism —and a courtroom full of a hundred armed Nazis let him finish his speech before they shoot him. Similarly, the New Order's people are convincing only when such competent actors as Otto Kruger portray them, modifying silly lines by the force of their personality. The others are flawed by an imbecile ignorance of human psychology—as if, having heard that Nazi education dehumanizes its children, the producers interpreted it by making all the film's Nazis walk and talk like Frankenstein's monster. Of the real corruption of Nazi youth, which is a bestial lack of orderliness and dignity rather than a mechanical excess of it, there is no hint here.

It has taken Hollywood two years to make an honest film about the Soviet Union. Nearly as much gunpowder has been burned in screen replicas of our own battles as in the battles themselves; every aspect of England's war effort has received repeated attention; Norway and France and the heroic resistance of China have inspired many pictures, good and bad, but always well-intentioned. Yet Russia has done four-fifths of the fighting without getting even one-fifth of the screen credit.

Warner Brothers, always more progressive than most film companies, has taken steps to remedy this shameful lack in the forthcoming *Mission to Moscow*. As everybody knows, this film is not "Communist propaganda"; it is based on official documents of the United States, on the book by Ambassador Davies—whom not even the imagination of Martin Dies could call a Communist. It shows the Soviet Union ridding itself of quislings, routing out and destroying the Trotskyite-fascist clique of spies and saboteurs. No nation of the world but might profit by Russia's example in dealing with these gentry. And so it is inevitable that all such gentry in the United States should writhe and howl with protest against *Mission to Moscow*.

Warner Brothers has set an admirable example by appealing directly to the people of America. Revealing the enormous pressure brought by fifth columnist forces against the film's production, the producers name those from whom a campaign of lies and slander is expected: the Trotskyite *New Leader*, Westbrook Pegler, Martin Dies. With ineptitude only equalled by its inaccuracy, the *New Leader* has promptly proved that Warner Brothers was right. The fight should be kept before the public, thus depriving the fifth column groups of their strongest weapon: secrecy.

Joy Davidman.

Good Slugging

"Men in Shadow"—a war melodrama with more than suspense and action.

Mary Hayley Bell's *Men in Shadow* has been holding London audiences for months; and the reason why is not hard to discover at the Morosco Theater, where Roy Hargrave is both directing and starring in Max Gordon's American version of the play. It is a war melodrama that satisfies the need to get a good grip on a Nazi throat or to plunge a hefty knife into a Nazi heart. This is definitely a part of the suspenseful business at hand, but only a part. There is another need to be satisfied: to see something concrete being done to prepare the way for an Allied invasion of the continent. *Men in Shadow* is reassuring in this respect too. It is a very limited play, but it keeps slugging at the enemy right up to the last curtain.

There is only one scene: the loft of an old mill adjoining a farmhouse somewhere on the French coast. This is the hideout of the Americans Lew and Kenny and the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FREE the FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM

UNITED RALLY

For the Release of

SPANISH LOYALIST PRISONERS

and Members of

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

NOW HELD IN NORTH AFRICA

CARNEGIE HALL

MONDAY — APRIL 5th — 8 P. M.

Organized by the Spanish Section of

THE FREE WORLD ASSOCIATION

In Collaboration With

Labor, Liberals and Religious Groups

TICKETS
$1.65 - $1.10 - 55c

ROOM 1054 — 55 WEST 42 STREET
Telephone: LA. 4-5408

HERE'S THE AMMUNITION

to: The Editors, NEW MASSES
104 East 9th Street, New York, N. Y.

$_____ is enclosed as my initial contribution.

IN ADDITION, I want to pledge $_____ so that NEW MASSES can fully cover its planned budget. (Please indicate the date or dates of your pledged donation.)

My pledge dates are _____

NAME _____

STREET & NUMBER _____

CITY _____

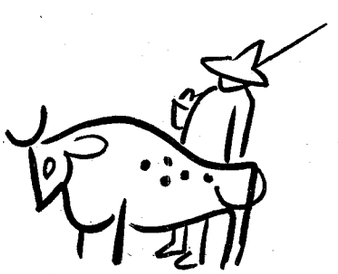
STATE _____

Englishman Polly, who are working with the French underground. These "saboteurs," tough, daring, heroes without headlines, send flares up to guide our planes, keep tab on Nazi troop movements, wreck enemy installations. The French farmhouse is going to be used by the Germans for billeting troops; Lew and the others must get out in a hurry. But they have a real problem with Wally, the American whose plane had cracked up nearby. Wally's broken legs have been set by the old French farmwoman Cherie; he can't be moved for two days.

Knowing that they will make it does not relieve any of the neck-scrunching tension. There is a German spy posing as an Englishman to be gotten out of the way. There are two Nazi soldiers to be killed, quickly, without sound. The audience becomes an uncomfortable participant (good!) in an action that takes guts, coolness, ingenuity. The gasps are distinctly audible in the theater. Reviewers who were slightly offended by the businesslike killing ought to tie a string around their typewriters to remind them there's a war going on.

It is a virtue of the play that it never pretends to be more than melodrama; neither the writer nor the director has tried to hoist it up by its own bootstraps. We all agree pretty near the beginning that this is not going to be the great play of the war or anything of the sort. The characters are only slightly differentiated. The excitement of the play is predominantly physical, and there is little deepening of the ideas for which these men fight. At the same time this is not just killing for the sake of killing. When Kenny cracks the spy's neck he does it, as he says, for the kids whose faces have been smashed in by Nazis. The urgent importance of hours, minutes, seconds, is tied up with the urgent expectation of a second front.

The two best performances are given by Roy Hargrave as Lew and by Michelette Burani as Cherie. Hargrave is taut, quick and springy as a cat, and the tension of the play is in large part due to him. Miss Burani is excellent as the loyal, motherly, courageous farmwoman. Everett Sloane as Kenny, Dean Harens as Wally, and Francis De Sales as Polly give convincing portraits of plain-guy, hard-fighting types. The setting by Frederick Fox deserves special praise. It provides the right atmosphere for a play that sends shivers of anxiety down your spine. S. S.



Modern Dances

"Cante Flamenco," "Dust Bowl Ballads," and others.

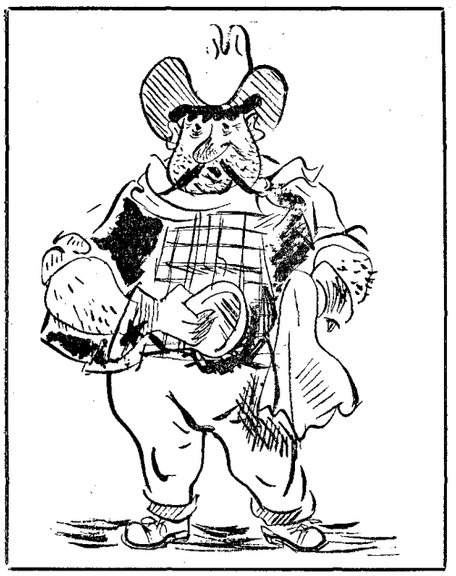
BEAUTIFUL dancing, like poetry and music, can certainly give an audience a lift. There was such dancing, and the audience cheered it, at the recent Sunday recital by Jane Dudley, Sophie Maslow, William Bales, and the assisting New Dance Group, at the Theresa Kaufmann Auditorium. These dancers, after close to a decade of trial and error, have at last hit their stride. Their technical equipment is breathtaking—not because of any indulgence in spectacular movement, but because, having such complete mastery of their instrument, they know exactly what they want to do with it.

Jane Dudley's feeling for dramatic overtones is as incisive in the perturbing "Short Story" as it is passionate in "*Cante Flamenco*"—an addition to the repertoire of dances inspired by the tragedy of modern Spain. An exquisite understanding of folk movement and a sensitive artistry in transferring the multi-rhythms of people's dancing onto a concert stage without condensation or oversimplification — these qualities make Sophie Maslow's "Dust Bowl Ballads" and her suite "Folksay" a delight to the heart as well as the eye. And William Bales will most assuredly be a topnotch performer when he "deintellectualizes" his approach to composition and lets himself go.

There is scarcely a critic in America today who would not pay homage to the talent and maturity and artistry of these three performers. Perhaps, then, it is unfair to them for me to step out of my proper role as a reviewer of what I have been invited to see, and to write about what I would have liked to see. But a still, quiet voice keeps reminding me that the basic function of all cultural expression today ought to be to help win the war and that the real stature of artists today cannot be gauged without considering the extent of their contribution to this all-encompassing task.

Here, during the third and perhaps most critical year of the war, was an entire program (one exception: "*Cante Flamenco*") conceived and executed by three mature progressive people, which voyaged down untroubled and sunny paths without the slightest tremor to remind one of the passions and agonies of an heroic world battling for its very existence. True, such violent subject matter is a stiff order for the creative imagination of any dancer to sift through, but it certainly is the basic challenge which has been flung before every kind of artist—yes, even dancers. I am sure that Isadora Duncan, whatever her limitations, would have been dancing up and down the length and breadth of this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



country of ours urging the people to fight together, sacrifice together, die together, win together. She would have gloried in our victories, and mourned for our temporary defeats. Maybe these dances would have been less sophisticated than those witnessed recently, but we, the people, would have emerged from the recital more stirred by the role which we ourselves would have to play in the period ahead.

Yes, we know that dancing can fill a need for entertainment at our army camps, USO centers, and on morale-building programs; but aren't there other forms of the dance which can foot the bill superbly under those conditions? Can these other forms of the dance, however, ever hope to achieve the emotional impact and communication which are inherent in the best of the modern dance? Surely there is something in the heroism of the guerrillas—the children, the women; in the tragedy of the Jews; in the eternal symbols of Bataan and Stalingrad to strike a responsive chord in the creative thinking of these artists? And surely there are audiences throughout the country who would be inspired and moved by the presentation of such material?

It is the great privilege of art today to make us aware of the deeper meanings of the struggle raging in the world. And anyone who loves dancing yearns to see its full vigor and full beauty directed toward an acknowledgment of that responsibility. I wish these three dancers who delighted their audiences so (and they most certainly have a personal right to choose to do that and nothing more) would turn their superior expressive talents toward a new kind of morale-building—toward portraying in their art the unconquerable heroism of a fighting people and the noble aspirations of an embattled world. Maybe the results will be less theatrical and charming—but the reward will be victory.

FRANCIS STEUBEN.

NOW PLAYING **ADELPHI THEA.** 54th Street E. of 7th Ave. Circle 6-5097

Lifts its audiences out of their seats ★★★+"—Mantle, News

Counterattack

A NEW HOME AT POPULAR PRICES!

EVENINGS AND MATS. SAT. & SUN. 50c - $1 - $1.50

SATURDAY & SUNDAY EVES. — 50c to $2 (Plus tax)

ARTKINO Presents

The startling confession of a Nazi officer in Poland-Czechoslavakia-Soviet Union:

"DIARY OF A NAZI"

Extra Added Attraction: A New Soviet war comedy

"Vanka"

Continuous from 9 A.M.

28c to 1 P.M. Weekdays

STANLEY THEA. 7th Ave. bet. 41-42 Sts. WI. 7-9686

ANGEL STREET

with

JOHN EMERY — JUDITH EVELYN — LEO G. CARROLL

Staged by Shepard Traube

GOLDEN THEATRE, 45 St. W. of B'way

Evenings incl. Sunday at 8:40

Matinees Saturday and Sunday

Mexican Good Neighbor Film Program!

CARMEN AMAYA in a repertoire of her most famous dances.

and "SILK, BLOOD AND SUN"

Plus: "CRIME IN THE MAGINOT LINE"

Continuous from 10:30 A.M. till midnight

20c to 2 P.M. weekdays

IRVING PLACE IRVING PLACE at 14th St.

Benefit Block Tickets at Reduced Prices—GR. 5-9879

SYLVAN LAKE NEWS

Good News for Sylvan Lake Vacationists

If you intend to spend your vacation in beautiful Sylvan Lake area this summer and do not care to use your own car, don't worry; your transportation problem has been solved without interfering with the war effort.

Get in Touch With Your Favorite Camp

for full details at once and it is advisable that you make your reservations now or you may find difficulty in getting accommodations later. There are other advantages if you act now.

SYLVAN LAKE CAMP OWNERS ASSOCIATES

SOMMERSET BUNGALOW COLONY
FOREST LAKE COUNTRY CLUB
WHITE BIRCH COLONY
DUTCHESS ACRES
HILL TOP LODGE
GLEN HOPE COLONY

SCHOOL FOR DEMOCRACY

Spring Term – 1943

Begins April 12

Courses and Lectures with:

Canada Lee, Dr. Howard Selsam, Phoebe Brand, Morris U. Schappes, Don Oscar Becque, Dr. Philip Foner, Lajo Egri, Kumar Goshal, Dr. Charles Obermeyer, Alfred Saxe, Assemblyman Hulan Jack, Joy Davidman, Laurence F. Hawkins, Dr. Rosemary Lippitt, Bertha C. Reynolds.

Write or phone *now* for catalog

School for Democracy

$8 PER COURSE

13 Astor Place, New York GR. 7-4086

Registration from March 29, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ORDER L-240

Dear Reader:

Perhaps you have never seen the War Production Board announcement of December 31 last: Part 3133—Printing and Publishing, General Limitation Order L-240. It requires magazines to reduce their paper consumption by 10 percent of the amount used in 1942. NEW MASSES, of course, took steps to conform fully to this order. We now bring L-240 to **your** attention—because you can play a crucial role in enabling us to follow the letter and spirit of the order without curtailing our role in helping to win the war.

For L-240 COULD mean, simply, that NM must print only **nine** copies in 1943 for every **ten** printed last year. It COULD easily mean ten percent less readers. But WITH YOUR HELP, this will not happen. Will you give that help? You can do it in either one of two ways. But please choose one and **follow it regularly:**

METHOD ONE: Buy your copy of NEW MASSES every week at the same newsstand. This makes it possible for NM to print only one copy for you each week. When you buy irregularly, from various stands, we must print two to three copies for you to be sure you get one.

METHOD TWO: Get your copy of NEW MASSES by subscribing for it. **This is the most effective method for you and for the magazine.** We print only one copy each week for you—and you save money with a subscription. Take a look at the rates below, and fill in your subscription blank today.

Herbert Goldfrank

Business Manager.

NEW MASSES, 104 East 9th Street, N. Y. CITY

Enclosed find $..... for which please send NM for one full year, 52 weeks.

(There are 2 methods of payment; we prefer the first; you may prefer the second.)

☐ One Year, $5.00.

☐ One Year $1.00 down payment. Bill $1 monthly for 4 months.

NAME.....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... STATE.....

SUB SENT IN BY

NAME.....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... STATE.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED